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Version: Version of Record

Link(s) to article on publisher's website:

<http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21954/ou.ro.0000fcbe>

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TACITUS AND ROMAN BRITAIN

with special reference to

de vita Agricolae.

By

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A dissertation offered for the
degree of B. Phil. at the Open
University, in the Faculty of
Arts: Classical Studies.

December, 1980.

Date of submission: 1-3-81

Date of award: 3-9-81

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Tacitus and Roman Britain with special reference to the Agricolae.

In order to understand the writings of Tacitus which deal with Roman Britain we need to know something of his ideas expressed in the totality of his works and also correlate them with our knowledge of Roman Britain derived from other sources, including archaeology and provincial administration.

Section 1 deals with Tacitus the man and his ideas: - his origins probably in an equestrian family living in Gallia Narbonensis; his rise in the senatorial order to high office and acquisition of a great reputation as an orator. It was a great career which spanned the "terror" of Domitian and the coup which brought Trajan to power. These events marked his spirit. In the midst of these times he turned to historical writing, which proved to be a suitable vehicle for the expression of his ideas.

Section 2 examines the Agricolae, the subject of which was his own father in law. It is something of a "tract for the times" as well as a guide to successful governorship, which might not get the rewards that might have been expected. Agricola must be seen, however, within the context of provincial administration, and the senatorial cursus, both of which are examined.

Section 3 studies Tacitus's references to the geography, anthropology and ethnography of Britain. Our dependence on this material continues to be great (except in the matter of geography).

Section 4 reviews the material covering the province before the accession of Vespasian.

Section 5 studies the province under the Flavians up to the recall of Agricola, with an examination of the fate of the northern conquests.

Tacitus remains our principal literary source for the history of the province. Archaeology sheds light on matters where Tacitus is silent or where his text has been lost; but for the most part wherever Tacitus can be checked by such remains or from the other sources his essential veracity is vindicated.

TACITUS AND ROMAN BRITAIN.

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Abbreviations.

- C.I.L. - Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum
- I.L.S. - H. Dessau. Inscriptiones Latinae selectae.
- R.I.B. - R.G. Collingwood & R.P. Wight. Roman Inscriptions in Britain. 1st ed. 1965.

INTRODUCTION.

INTRODUCTION:

Among the literary sources available for the study of Roman Britain de vita Agricola looms large; though there are accounts of particular episodes in the Annals and Historias. All three come from the pen of Cornelius Tacitus. In addition there are passages from Dio Cassius and Suetonius which throw light on the Roman occupation of Britain. However, the Agricola appears to have a certain wholeness about it. At first sight a life is dealt with which seems to be of crucial importance for the history of the province. Julius Agricola was legatus Augusti pro praetore (governor) of Britannia for an unprecedented period. In his biography the history of the province up to the end of his governorship seems to be summarized. "Scissors and paste" historians (1) might think that here, at any rate, they had a source which they might take safely as their main authority, onto which other material could be added in order to complete their collage. On this view Ca. Julius Agricola is the history of Roman Britain in the first century AD. (2).

This may be true; but it cannot be accepted with^{out} examination. We should now be naive to accept any source or authority at face value. Many errors have grown from such simplicity. It behoves the historian to know not only his own presuppositions but those of his authorities. History is re-enacted in the mind of authorities as much as in the mind of the historian. There ought to be no passive surrender to the spell of another's mind. In re-enacting the past in his mind the historian criticizes it, forms his own judgment and so corrects whatever errors he can discern. It is a labour of active and therefore critical thinking (3)

We must enquire, therefore, as best we may, by asking what was the question posed by the author himself, as a result of which he wrote as he did? We cannot find out what a person means merely by studying the overt content of their statements. What people say often has an ulterior meaning. (4) Professor Hodgson, writing of Biblical criticism, put the point well when he wrote: "What must the truth have been if it appeared like this to men who thought like that?". (5)

Thus, for us to know the truth, as far as we can, it appears to be essential for us to begin not with the Agricola but with its author, Cornelius Tacitus. What we consider to be the truth about the Agricola will emerge when we have re-enacted the past for ourselves and teased out Tacitus's own re-enactment of it, in response to the question he had posed for himself and which he was answering when he composed this work. We shall have to accept the subjectivity of the result. That is inevitable.

No more can we yearn for the "scientific history" which thought it could give us immediate experience of an event "wie es eigentlich gewesen ist". In all that follows it will be well to remember by how slender a thread hangs our knowledge both of Tacitus and his works. The manuscripts are few in number and it is not easy to produce a received text of universally accepted readings. Parts of the manuscript are missing but the text of the Agricola appears to be entire without either omissions or dislocations. The Agricola, Germania and Dialogus seem to belong to one MSS tradition. There was a manuscript of the Germania at the monastery of Fulda (Hessen Nassau, Germany) in the 9th Century. A little later Adam of Bremen seems to have used Agricola c.11 in his history of the church in Hamburg. So it is thought that there was probably a copy of the Agricola at this important monastic centre of learning. Furthermore, it is clear that there was a copy of it at the monastery of Monte Cassino, with which Fulda had close links, since its librarian quotes from it c.1135. There follows a long period during which nothing is known of the manuscripts and from the silence of mediaeval authors it seems clear that Tacitus was not well-known. Cicero and Livy are far more popular writers. From about 1422 rumours began to circulate about the existence of Roman historical manuscripts in Germany. Research followed and was completed by publication. The Annals and the Histories are in the same case and depend upon the same manuscript source.

These are the works of Tacitus, so far as is known. The order of composition is broadly agreed: Agricola, Germania, Histories Annals. The Dialogus may fit in between Germania and the Histories. It is not regarded as a very early work, as was supposed in the past. The order is not important from the point of view of the present study except in one particular. There is a commonly held view that it was with the Agricola that Tacitus launched himself as a historian. If this is indeed true, and there are no substantial reasons for doubting it, then he is, at this stage, an apprentice and not yet a master craftsman. This will serve to make us aware that there might be certain imbalances which a more experienced writer might have overcome but which he had removed by the time he wrote the later works. Certain attitudes may be evident that are absent from later works. Others may persist throughout. After all, we do assume, generally, that there is some development in a person's thought during the course of life. It is these attitudes, whether changing or constant, which we seek to elucidate, in order to establish some means of assessing the way in which events are not only described but interpreted. These Tacitean views have to be derived from his writings on historical events, since there is nowhere else from which they can be garnered. Unlike some historians he wrote no

autobiography and none of his contemporaries composed critical studies of him. Other than his own works we have nothing, except a few references in the letters of the Younger Pliny. (6) who believed that his friend's works would prove to be immortal, if only because he was such a perfectionist. "You are never satisfied with yourself", he wrote. Does that mean that he constantly revised his works, up to the very moment of publication? We also learn that he was a most eloquent orator, who had delivered the oration at the funeral of Verginius Rufus (7) and had acted in court with Pliny. Such experience might be expected to affect his historical style.

Together they might have been regarded as the two most distinguished literary figures of the day. The personal touches from Pliny are interesting but they do not throw much light upon the values which Tacitus held. We do, indeed, see a dim reflection in a mirror. However, from a variety of sources we can piece together something both about the man himself and his values. We commence with the former.

SECTION 1.

CORNELIUS TAGITUS.

1.1. The Man.

1.2. His Ideas.

1.3. Britain in the writings of Tacitus.

1.4. Literary Features.

1.5. Tacitus and other historians of the first century

1.6. Tacitus as a historian.

1.7. Conclusion.

Footnotes.

1.1. THE MAN

Tacitus was born between 54 and 56 AD. The actual date is uncertain. It is inferred from the Dialogus where at 17.3., 75 AD seems to be clearly indicated as its dramatic locus. At 1.2. Tacitus refers to himself as iuvonis admodum which would make him about 18 at that time. Thereafter the rest is derived from the normal sequence of promotions in the senatorial cursus honorum, within specific age limits. (8). A certain Cornelius Tacitus was known to the Elder Pliny (9) but this is clearly not our author. This man was procurator in Gallia Belgica, where he was concerned with financial affairs. Since Tacitus is a rare cognomen we may infer that this is a forebear. Furthermore, as the Younger Pliny states that he and Tacitus were life-long friends, it is possible that the two families had been friendly with each other before their generation. If this is so, then we have some knowledge of the historian's antecedents, of which, perhaps, the most important is his equestrian origins. We need not infer, however, that both Pliny and Tacitus hailed from the same province, though perhaps both of them were provincials.

"Transpadane Italy, Narbonensis or Spain - somewhere in that provincial and dynamic zone is the home of Cornelius Tacitus" writes Sir Ronald Syme (10), thereby embracing a large tract of empire. However, he narrows the choice down to Narbonensis. First, he draws attention to the marriage of Tacitus with the daughter of Agricola. The governor in his search for "character, education and promise in a son-in-law may have preferred not to look beyond the borders of Narbonensis". No doubt this consideration may have crossed the mind of Agricola but if it did then Tacitus gives no sign of it. No quest for a suitable son-in-law is revealed in the Agricola. Second, and more significantly, the inscriptions from Narbonensis provide evidence for the existence of four Taciti resident there. (11). All of them come from the native and not from the colonial areas of the Vocontii and in particular from Vasio. This Syme singles out as a place and area of high culture, being demonstrated by the splendour of its monuments, as well as by its general contribution to arts, letters and government. From this place came Afranius Burrus (12) who was tutor and minister to Nero. In addition there was Davius Avitus, a consular, who commanded four legions on the Lower Rhine. There is a knot of influential connexions here which link Narbonensis with Belgica, together with some people whom the forebears of Tacitus might have served. All put together they might provide us with a true background but in the last resort we have to grant that all is surmise, as

even Syme himself admits. The array of evidence is "not quite enough to prove the historian's 'patria' ". It might, he writes, have been some other city of Narbonensis; possibly the "vetus et industrius Foriciuliensium colonia".(Agri. 4.1.) The argument fades away. "It does not matter much, the place where a man happens to be born is a mere accident, telling nothing about rank or origin. It is not his 'patria' ". (13). Three, it can be shown, however, that Tacitus writes of Gallic lands with knowledge, discernment and sympathy, (14) as the reader may discover for himself, and this would tend to strengthen the argument in favour of Narbonensis.

Furthermore, the cognomen Tacitus need not be supposed a Latin word. Both location and status show it to be native to North Italy and the 'barbarian fringe'. It has been argued that the Agricola gives a certain prominence to the philosophical circle of Paetus (15) whose family was Paduan. Furthermore, Tacitus is supposed to have a sense of guilt about this group. This is argued from Agricola, 2.1. and 45.1. However, it may be equally argued that those mentioned are singled out as the most significant victims, in common estimation, as well as that of the writer. It seems quite clear that he experienced regret about the period as a whole, rather than for any group in particular within it. The mention of Livy at 10.3. is also held to betoken a Transpadanian origin. On the other hand Livy was a historian whose work was relevant to that of Tacitus, at that point. Surely reference is made to him on that account rather than on grounds of local feeling. Even the presence of several Transpadanians along with Tacitus in the will of Domitian cannot be regarded as decisive. Friendship must be allowed some part. (16). These arguments advanced by Koesterman (17) do not clinch the decision in favour of North Italy rather than Southern France. It is the connexion with Agricola that tends to locate him with the governor's patria in conjunction with the epigraphic evidence.

We may conclude then that Tacitus was a provincial, perhaps of Gallic stock, who originated in Narbonensis, the son of an equestrian financial official, serving in Gallia Belgica and the two Germanias. "These Cornelii are a new family, rising in the service of the Caesars and discovered at the moment of transition" (18). He is, therefore, a man very much in the mould of his father-in-law, Julius Agricola, whose daughter he married in 77 AD.

At this time he commenced his public career, under the Emperor Vespasian, as he openly admits at the beginning of the Histories: (1.1.) The reference is, perhaps, rather too vague for us to give it a clear interpretation,

and so it is from our knowledge of careers in the imperial service as a whole that we infer his progress and approximate date for appointments held.

The grant of the latus clavus (the right to wear the broad purple stripe), which gave admission into the senatorial order, came from Vespasian, who doubtless provided his first appointment as tribunus militum. He was aquilestis sometime between 78 and 82. The appointment cannot be more precisely dated and this means that we are unable to determine whether the post was held under Vespasian, Titus or Domitian. (19). Two or three years later he might well have become tribune of the plebs if he did not receive an aedileship. He was praetor in 88 and also quindecimvir sacris faciundis, in which capacity he took part in the Saecular Games of that year. To hold such a priesthood, at that stage, might be thought to betoken not only a man of ability but one in favour. It does seem as though he had, by now, achieved eminence as a lawyer and an orator of eloquence in Rome.

After his praetorship it appears as though he was absent from Rome for a period, "It is a fair assumption that Tacitus commanded a legion, as did every novus homo ambitious to see his name on the Fasti," argues Syme, but then he adds, "otherwise a civilian employment might be surmised." (20). The latter might be preferred because Tacitus has not always been well regarded as a military historian. His battle scenes are often masterly reconstructions of atmosphere, with their brilliant evocations of heroism, the disintegration of morale and sudden reversals of fortune, but tactically they "often create more factual problems than they solve". Generals do not win battles very often when they lack a control plan, even if they create an atmosphere. It is hard to think that one who had been a competent legatus legionis would allow military capacity to be clouded by the attempt to create rhetorical effect. (21). Had he been an incompetent legate, however, it would, surely, have counted against him when higher appointments were being considered. Tacitus does not appear to have suffered any check. Either the battles were confused and the descriptions aim to convey the difficulties of comprehension and control or he might be thought to have passed to a civilian appointment rather than to a military posting. There were, in fact, a number of suitable offices open to an ex-praetor, such as the governance of a province of the appropriate grade. But we cannot even guess intelligently at this gubernatorial post he might have held. At the completion of that term, however, he became suffect consul in 97 and attained the highest office open to a senator in 112 or 113 when he became Proconsul of Asia. It

was the climax of his career. (22)

Imprecise as the description of the course of Tacitus's public offices is, at many points, what we do know is important. First it shows that when he turned to historical studies he was a mature man of over 40; assuming that the Agricola is the first work he wrote and published about 97. (23). Second, he had led an active life in public service. If Edward Gibbon could write in his Autobiography of his two and a half years of "military servitude" as a captain in the army, that it gave him a clearer notion of the phalanx and legion and "the captain of the Hampshire Grenadiers (the reader may smile) has not been useless to the historian of the Roman Empire", then, how much more valuable for the writing of history must have been the experience of one who spent a lifetime in political affairs, during which he held the principal offices of state. All this gave Tacitus direct knowledge of how the empire was governed, for his perception was placed at the right level to see it. The experience burned into his spirit and marked it permanently.

1.2. HIS IDEAS

Of the emperors Tacitus had known or studied, Vespasian stood out as the only one whom office had improved. The rest had been corrupted by it, he thought. The rule of the Flavians proved to be a descent into the abyss. Titus had but a short spell of supreme power after the death of his father, Vespasian. When death carried off the elder son, the younger, Domitian, ruled in his stead. He gradually reduced the senatorial order to a state of terror. (24). Yet there was no opposition. There was no show of independence from Tacitus anymore than from anyone else. In later days he seems to have reacted against what might be called the retrospective opposition of his contemporaries. Such hindsight was both useless and vain-glorious. It proclaimed the sin of silence during the dark years. Those who have forfeited their self-respect had better moderate their statements about the past, since it involves their role in it. (25)

There may be a sense in which Tacitus was never able to come to terms with public affairs and himself after this 'dark night of the soul'. Whatever ideals and hopes may have been held, it was nonetheless a political fact that since the Battle of Actium power had been concentrated in the hands of one man. There was no escape from that reality. Its inescapable nature, however, produced moral degeneracy. First, the emperors became men whom power and authority distorted. Few men had more experience of public affairs than Tiberius but even he was ruined by the impact of absolute power. Domitian did not even have that protective cover. Not only was he

young when he came to power but as the younger son had been held back and placed under the shadow of his able elder brother. His succession to the throne was devastating. His insistence upon being addressed as *Kurios* (Lord) was symptomatic of the infection. The whim of the prince was now the single thread upon which human happiness hung. Second, as a result, people were corrupted. For then there was no protection from the characteristics of such a political and social system: which were envy, hatred, flattery, sycophancy, suspicion, espionage, secret trials and summary executions. The institutions of society were reduced to impotence. They neither restrained the prince nor protected the people. But, the world Rome had lost - complete with its traditional values and institutions - could never be recovered. Tacitus seems to have recognised that, but the effect was to 'split' his personality. Domitian lay on the conscience of this high-principled man. As a result he writes like one whose integrity has been violated. The saeva indignatio which was characteristic of Dean Swift was constantly present in the Roman historian. It manifested itself in his moral preoccupation, constant probing of motive and his interpretation of events. Perhaps it was this attitude that made a historian of him, and gave him such a high sense of vocation. If the evil could not be undone, then at least it could be exposed for what it was. After the years of suffocating silence men should not be allowed to forget what really had happened, nor should they be permitted to gloss over their own part in those hideous days. There may have been a second spur. "All history is contemporary history" wrote Benedetto Croce in an aphorism that has become famous. It means that we must ask what was happening to Tacitus and his contemporaries at the time he was writing. Biblical scholars have shown clearly how the Gospels not only deal with their overt contents but also reveal something of the preoccupations of the time in which they were written. Their sitz im leben discloses the situation of the early church. Thus, by the time Tacitus wrote the Agricola, Domitian was dead. Could it be that it was both the memory of Domitian and more that gave the stimulus to history? Agricola, Tacitus writes, was happy in his death. He was delivered from the tyranny of evil days. Yet he did lose something by his untimely demise: the sight of the accession of Trajan. This was, Tacitus alleged, an event prophesied by Agricola and, indeed, prayed for. (Agri. 44.5.) The Agricola, writes Syme, is a manifesto on behalf of Trajan's new aristocracy. (26). At last the new men were able to enter, honourably, upon their inheritance. The Agricola expounded their moral and political ideals. It is not done in any systematized fashion; rather they are

disclosed gradually by the portrayal of one man taken to be representative of the class. These new patricians had carried their families forward to the field of honours but had been denied their reward, despite their modesty and skill in steering a course between extravagance and economy - sober unobtrusive virtues. They were neither heroic nor spectacular. They were provincials maintaining the ancient virtues of frugal merit and rustic valour. (27).

Any reader of the Agricola may see readily enough that it is an idealised portrait of a man. What is not so easily perceived is the possibility that it is the idealisation of a whole class. If this is so, then there can be but little wonder that during the bleak years of Domitian they lived with a "sense of injur'd merit". The last Flavian had prevented them from taking their place in social and political affairs. Instead there had been the years of silence. Time in which men could grow old and die. (Agri. 3.2.) The period had merely shown that good men could live and work even under a bad emperor; but they were denied their reward. (Agri. 42.5.) Agricola was frustrated after he left Britain by jealousy and pique. The new men could only be stunted growths in the shadow of the princens. There was no trace of the independence that had marked the old nobility. On the contrary these aspirants to the highest dignity had brought with them quies, the mark of the equestrian order from which they sprang. Modesty and discretion were to remain their hall marks. Of necessity, libertas was replaced by obsequium. Even among those who governed provinces, subordination and obedience were necessary virtues, when confronted by the Kurios who was also imperator. Even after everything had been well done, as Agricola found, a man might be denied his reward.

The days of Nerva and Trajan brought happy relief. Perhaps, at last, they could grow under the rule of sympathetic rulers; "ubi sentire quae velis et quae sentias dicere licet". (Hist. 1.1.) It was, perhaps, easy to write this but the hope might yet be blighted. Was the brief reign of Nerva a false dawn? How did Trajan come to "emerge" as his successor? And what caused the nomination to take place? Was there a bloodless coup brought about by the army commanders, who remembered afresh that emperors can be made outside Rome? While Syme has not been able to chart the course by which Trajan was adopted by Nerva, he is quite clear about its implication for Tacitus. He argues that as suffect consul in 97 Tacitus was at the heart of affairs, during what was, perhaps, the crucial period. There he found that both Nerva and libertas were but an episode. Strong and enduring tendencies had been arrested but for a moment. Then they resumed their course. "The military oligarchy, aided by certain men in the background,

were firm and subtle. They rescued the state from a brief interlude of 'Libertas', set it back on a proper path of government, deposed an incompetent ruler (for such in effect was their action) and installed one of their class as 'Imperator!' (28).

Disappointment thus fell upon the new hopes. There could be nothing other than passivity in such a political order. Anything else was both futile and dangerous. On this interpretation the delight in the new order expressed in both the Agricola and, to some extent, the Histories may have started as genuine pleasure but ended as conventional statements of loyalty, stopping short of flattery. (29). Some declaration of loyalty was the sine qua non of continued participation in public life. Those in power, generally, do require explicit loyalty from their principal associates. Withdrawal from public life could always be considered but that was quite against the tradition of the class. A man might be what he would - farmer or historian - but that should not engross the whole of his concern. It was only in the field of public life that virtus could be won by an appropriate display of virtutes. To abstain from politics was ignavia et inertia. (30). Thus men such as Tacitus were driven remorselessly into dangerous waters as surely as their predecessors. However, they were not the inevitable opponents of the new imperium. It had, in fact, made them, even though it had mastered them. There was, doubtless, frustration among the men of high principle and spirit. In the absence of any real open political debate it might have been that history afforded a suitable, though disguised, outlet. Points might be made of the past and into the past that could not be said of the present and in it. An analysis of fundamental contemporary issues could be taken from the present and rooted in the past. Such discussion might be safer and could also appear detached. Tacitus invoked both truth and impartiality as necessary virtues for historical writing. Those who profess inviolable fidelity to truth, he argued, must speak not only without affection but without hatred. In such terms he declared himself at the opening of the Histories. However, we may regard him as more committed than such statements indicate. The fires lit by the events contemporary with Domitian, Nerva and Trajan flicker through the pages of his works, as may be seen readily by those who have an eye for typology. By this means a figure in the past can be made to stand for a person contemporary with the writer. Thus, in the Histories Galba is a "type" for Nerva. Both were rulers who came to power after the sudden downfall of an established dynasty. They both lost control of the political and military positions with which they were confronted. As a result there was a danger that both the empire and the capital would be

dragged down to ruin. One failed completely and died by violence; the other also failed, perhaps in a more disguised fashion, and died before his political impotence could be manifested. (Though those at the centre of events like the suffect consul, might understand the properties of the situation straight away.) Each of them had been obliged to appoint a successor. In both cases there was the possibility of gerontocracy and a revolt by the guard.

However, typology is rarely able to be totally consistent in the establishment of parallels. This does not matter, since the purpose is not a complete allegory but the giving of hints about the present in the light of the past. A few coincidences suffice.

The Annals, being much greater in scope and variety than the earlier works, make the typology more difficult to sustain. Furthermore one must always remember how much of the work is missing. Some general typology might be attempted, though it is interesting to note that Syme is more restrained about the "sitz im leben" of the Annals than he is for the other works. Attention may be drawn to two points. 1. The description of Tiberius is sustained, powerful and damning. He is held to stand for Domitian, who happened to admire him, as well as for all those who bear autocratic monarchical rule. 2. Tiberius could be a warning to Trajan since both had been distinguished generals who came to power in later middle life. If history is thought to afford examples, then might Tiberius be an example of how not to be an emperor? If the Agricolae describes the loyal official, then the Annals delineates the temptations of power for those in supreme command.

Few writers have advanced this second opinion, but once this typological argument has been developed, on the basis of Tacitus's experiences, then it cannot be ruled out. None of his contemporaries, however, seemed to wish to keep the memory of Domitian fresh. They preferred to blot it out. And Trajan went his own way to triumphs indifferent to the admonitions of writers! However, even if Tacitus makes reference to the happy times of Trajan as emperor, it is quite clear that throughout his works there is continuous criticism of monarchical autocracy. The general import of the history and its types can hardly be missed.

The suggestion of Syme that the experience of Tacitus as suffect consul in 97 was more influential than the impact of the rule of Domitian is valuable, even if we consider it to be somewhat over-stated. One factor that must lead to restraint is the sheer difficulty of writing a number of works over a considerable period of time in which a most elaborate typological structure is introduced and sustained throughout a description of a most varied series of events. From the explicit words of Tacitus himself, not

least in the Agriicola, an important place must be found for the effect of those silent fifteen years under Domitian and what they implied for the constitutional issue of the monarchy. The addition of the experiences of 97, in a general way, show that the historian continued to be affected by events contemporary with himself, which, therefore, to some degree affect his understanding both of past and present. The observation, first of all, helps to explain how an eloquent rhetorician became a student of history. Secondly it makes allowance for the possibility that Tacitus grew in capacity as a historian and did not remain an oratorical pamphleteer. The Annals demonstrate the powers of one who has matured, concerned, perhaps, less with typology than in former times, but possessed of an undiminished moral concern. Events are scrutinized rather than subjected to the application of crude political criteria. Extending Syme's argument, could it be that the worst fears of Tacitus were not realised?

Trajan showed himself to be neither Domitian nor Tiberius but himself. He was one of the new men, along with Tacitus, who had also passed through the shadow of the valley. For him, as well as for others, the bad old times were never to be allowed again. A consideration of the later career of Tacitus shows that somehow he, too, came to terms with the new regime. His appointment as Proconsul of Asia can be regarded as evidence for that. (112-113). No ruler would have accepted, let alone proposed, for the supreme provincial appointment open to a senator, the nomination of a man who was unsympathetic to the regime. One who was hostile to it could never have been tolerated in such a responsible position. He must have been persona grata. If then scholars have been right about the Tacitean perspective on the emperors derived from his experience of Domitian and the Trajanic coup then one can only infer that thereafter he "wrote out" his anxieties from himself, and by the time he had done so, found that conditions were not as terrible as he had feared.

Nobody seems to doubt that the works of Tacitus were published in his life-time. The letters from Pliny make that clear. There is nothing to suggest that they were held back for political reasons. Whether they were first delivered at public readings or disseminated in written forms probably any literate Roman could take the points and understand the types. Indeed, they may have seen much that eludes us. Could they really have missed the double entendre? Could government officials, let alone informers, have been blind to the implications of what this famous orator declaimed and wrote? Even if it were thought to be merely a pose, and therefore not taken seriously by the author, it might still have been carefully scrutinised for its effect

on others. It is hard to think that his contemporaries did not understand what he meant. Account must have been taken of his works. There is enough in the history of the empire in the first century to indicate that the imperial court took note of literature. Tacitus was surely assessed, and not found wanting, at least by the time that he was considered for the proconsulship. Again, the argument of Syme can be extended: Tacitus might now be speaking for influential parts of the new regime. He had started out as the private spokesman of a class personified in Agricola. Now he had a wider role. The common experience of Domitian and the coup of 97 strengthened the ties which bound members of that class together. Trajan and his supporters identified themselves with that criticism of the old regime. They had all been through those evil days. Now it was over with the hope of better times to come. Though constitutional forms could never regress to republicanism it was now their empire. Henceforth it would be different.

1.3. BRITAIN IN THE WRITINGS OF TACITUS

Where, then, does Britain feature in those corridors of imperial power? Everything that has been written so far must ^{have} prepared the reader for the answer that it lies on the margin of imperial politics. Roman history is metropolitan centred. It could not have been otherwise, by the nature of the Roman state itself. The provinces had significance in relation to the politics and policies of the capital. Rome was the only centre round which other activities could be grouped. Professor Hugh Trevor-Roper, I believe, caused annoyance among Black nationalists some years ago by suggesting that Africa lacked history before the white man came. There is a sense in which the same is true of the provinces of the empire. They could be described anthropologically as it were; and the Germania is an illustration of that genre of writing. But the Celts, for example, had no techniques of writing which would enable them to transmit a record of events. They had, therefore, no means of producing history. Both were provided by contact with the Romans, and thus we know of them within a Latin framework. The provinces in this way had significance in relation to events in the capital. That is not to say that what we have is of little use. It can be most valuable but one must be aware of the total perspective within which it is written. What is more damaging is the loss of some sections of the works of Tacitus. The course of events described within the Annals is contained within, what appears to be, a carefully planned structure. The work, it seems,

was to consist of three major sections, within which there were to be six books. The divisions are often clearly, not to say sharply, stated. Within this plan each year was dealt with. There are some exceptions, however, and of these Britain is one. Here and there the events of several years are brought together, writes Tacitus, in order to produce a continuous narrative of events. (31). Though clarity is thereby brought to the writing, problems of dating are posed for the modern historian, as we shall see later on. Within these sections there is also a certain dramatic pattern. Contrasts are heightened by the juxtaposition of characterisations, which give light and shade to the narrative and sharpen the moral contrasts. In the first section, devoted to Tiberius's rule, Germanicus is the dominant personality. In the second it is Sejanus. The form of composition is thus "contrapuntal" - theme against theme - to borrow a term from music. However, about half of the estimated work is lost. Section 1 dealing with Tiberius survives; section 2 is lost until the year 47 is reached, in book 5. The invasion of Britain is thus completely missing, together with the initial expansion of the provincial boundaries. The last part of the reign of Nero has also disappeared, leaving only a few enigmatic phrases about Britain to which attention will be given later. The reader will, at once, perceive how fragmentary the references to Britain must be and how great, therefore, must be the historian's hopes of the Agricolae. If Britain is not the centre of the Roman stage for Tacitus, we must beware ourselves of making the province the centre for any interpretation of the Roman world. It would be dangerous for us to attempt to deal typologically with the principal characters of provincial history in a way that made them the fore-runners of national self-consciousness. There is, after all, a statue to Boudicca in the shadow of the Houses of Parliament! The monument and its location have a clear import; she rallied opposition to foreign oppressors and drew together all those for whom patriotic independence was dear. There may be no statues to either Caratacus or Calgacus, but their speeches have been absorbed! Mercifully we know enough of ancient history to recognise the device, and should respect it. Thucydides put it well when he wrote that he had composed speeches expressing thoughts proper to the occasion, as he imagined the speaker might have expressed them. In the light of our earlier examination of the pre-occupations of Tacitus and the ways in which he expressed them, we could be naive if we

were to consider the speeches Thucydidean in intention. British personalities could be more related to Roman politics than native ideology. They ought to be scrutinised for hidden criticisms of issues with which Tacitus was concerned. Thus Caratacus speaks for the silenced nobility. Claudius's "attempts to glorify himself conferred additional glory on Caratacus in defeat... On reaching the dais he spoke in these terms... 'Humiliation is my lot, glory yours... If you want to rule the world, does it follow that everyone else welcomes enslavement?' " (Ann. 12 37). Calgacus reminds readers of the freedom that has been lost forever. Britons are the last people on earth to be free, uncorrupted and unconquered, ready to fight for freedom and not repenting of failure. (Agri. 31.32) One need not conclude that the Thucydidean element is wholly lacking, anymore than need assume that Tacitus eschewed the rhetorician's stock in trade of setting out a case with which he disagreed. But historical narrative as a whole and speeches in particular afforded the political critic an appropriate form of cover. Dr. Johnson was, at a later date, to take advantage of the device when he reported parliamentary debates in the guise of deliberations held in the chamber of a fictitious republic. His readers knew well enough how to demythologise the contents. What they could not know, as he later admitted, was that he did not attend the Houses of Parliament but made up the reports himself inserting into them such criticisms of affairs as he wished to make. We shall not wish to press the point to far; but merely notice again that when the importance of the "sitz in leben" is conceded then the structure and contents of historical writing come under a different kind of scrutiny. The approach becomes more critical, even sceptical. Now all the spirits are to be tested.

The total result is not to give us more knowledge of the affairs of Roman Britain but to make us more conscious of the bias of the material that we have. The light, as it were, is refracted through the prism of the mind of Tacitus, which was heavily occupied with matters other than an analysis of the state of life in a province to the extreme North West of the empire. He is a partisan, despite all protestations of impartiality. His claim to be unbiased because he did not have the incentives to political power is besides the point. The fact is that he had a different incentive for the shaping of his material. Syme and other scholars have made that abundantly clear. It only remains for us to agree that past experiences may twist the account as effectively as future hopes. (Ann. 1.1.)

1.4. LITERARY FEATURES .

We now draw attention to certain other features of the works of Tacitus, which by comparison with our previous discussion can only be regarded as somewhat less important. Nonetheless they do have a bearing upon the interpretation of the texts.

The style is difficult even though the effect is superb. Racine was right to name him the master painter of antiquity. But the works have been shaped more by the conventions of oratory than by the "presuppositions of critical history". More significant, however, are the major preoccupations which we have just examined. Of some account, but in the second rank are 1. his hatred of the mob, and in particular the populace of Rome. This is neither surprising nor unusual. Though he was a critic of monarchy he was no demagogue for democracy. It is the senatorial class that he upholds. 2. He has a certain fascination with warfare, which might be considered a feature common to many ancient historians, and a preoccupation with one whose experience was probably totally civilian. It is, perhaps, within this military context that Britain is best understood. The province was one of the principal theatres of war throughout the first century. It was also the most significant addition to the territory of the empire. Service there was the chief field of operations in which virtus could be displayed - that most important of Roman virtues in public affairs. Such a criterion would affect not only the choice of topics but also the magnitude of the treatment they received.

Tacitus has been severely criticised as a military historian. Some attention must be given to the matter, particularly since Mommsen was particularly savage. He averred that a worse narrative than Annals 14. 31-39 could hardly be found even in the most unimilitary of authors. The reader is not told where the troops were stationed, or where the battles were fought. Instead there are signs and wonders and too many empty words. The account of Boudicca's rebellion will have to be considered in detail below. Here it is enough to take Mommsen's main thrust: vagueness. There are a number of points, of a general kind, to be weighed against this.

1. A historian must take some things for granted in the minds of his readers. The difficulty arises when what was in the mind of his first readers cannot be transmitted to those of later generations. 2. It is not always clear what points of geographical reference Tacitus could use that would convey anything to an audience in Rome. Would they know where the half-legionary camp at Longthorpe stood in relation to

the campaign in Anglesey? How could the location of the auxiliary camps in the midlands be firmly placed in the reader's mental frame as he studied the text, somewhere south of the Alps? Precision only has importance when writer and reader have common geographical knowledge in adequate detail. That cannot be presumed for the first century Romans in mediterranean areas of culture. The campaigns must often have been vaguely understood events taking place "up North". Particular incidents might have been clear, but yet may have stood on their own rather than in any coherent frame of reference. Even though Tacitus's general striving for brevity sometimes over-compresses matters, what he does write is vigorously presented and uncluttered by superfluous detail. (32).

The latter point is not unimportant in relating the changing and often confusing positions within a military conflict. 3. The outcome of the battle might be considered more important than the details of its course. Vignettes might be more illuminating than the tracing of a complete tactical and strategic plan, if there were one. Battles are often confusing actions. It is not easy always to comprehend what is going on. The general's control overall might be weak, through no fault of his own but because there developed a series of semi-independent skirmishes within the whole battle area. If treated in toto, assuming that there were sources to make it possible, the total effect would be episodic, and confusion the worse confounded. Some part of the event may be taken to illustrate the whole and the role of an individual or group taken as representative of the army. It may not be "total history" but it can be representative.

That is not to excuse errors. Tacitus, like Homer, nods. How could Cartimandua have adorned the triumph of Claudius in 43 by an action she took in 51? How could the Brigantes have stormed Colchester? It seems unlikely that Tacitus toured the empire to verify his references, so we must accept that he could hardly be more accurate than his sources. But what might be excused is uncertain because we do not have access to his primary material. On the other hand, given the paucity of the manuscript tradition, it may be that the text is corrupt from the hand of a faulty copier or the false ideas of an improver. Nevertheless, like all human beings, Tacitus made errors, was guilty of omissions and had his outlook distorted by his prejudices. No historian has been acquitted on all three charges. There is a vagueness about Agricola's second year in Britain that one might not have expected. There might be some error in dating the rebellion of Boudicca. The site of her final defeat is uncertain. Perhaps it was not near anywhere in particular; or perhaps the terrain

was more important than the map reference. On the other hand when a more precise location was given at Mons Graupius, it has not been much more help to scholars who find the site of that battle equally elusive. Finally the reader may prefer to suspend judgment until the military passages have been studied as they occur in the history of the province. Here it will be sufficient to note the criticism levelled against Tacitus and remind ourselves that there are certain factors which taken together tend to draw the sting of the accusation.

We know well enough that there were established conventions in writing history in the ancient world. The use of speeches was one. There were others to which attention will be given when the nature of the Agricola itself is studied. Here we should note that Tacitus's battle pieces follow a fairly constant procedure. 1. The Roman order of deployment is given. The legions are mentioned specifically but the auxilia not. 2. The battle order of the enemy is then given. 3. The speech of the Roman commander comes next. 4. To be followed by that of his opponent. 5. The terrain is then described. 6. The initial attack commences. 7. There is a check on the Roman offensive. 8. A final attack carries the day. 9. Roman losses are given. Within this scheme there are tableaux of incidents together with a number of anecdotes. It is these last two features that give life and movement to the battle. No doubt the army suffered periodic checks within a conflict but it is hard to imagine that they occurred at the same point each time. The modern historian would see the situation somewhat differently. The end of the initial attack would be seen as the completion of phase 1 after which the battle would develop further. However, that was often the most difficult part of the conflict to control and it was therefore often the point at which localised battles broke out and the overall picture became obscured. The general effect of such a presentation is to stylise the event, as carefully constructed speeches halt the flow of the action. However, critical analysis, after the event, - a modern convention - may be said to have the same effect. Once again we must be aware of the nature of the sources available to us and take account of them in our attempt to use them for the history of Roman Britain (33).

Within these conventions, however, we can see the extent to which Tacitus is interested in the individual. For him, as for Carlyle, history is the biographies of innumerable people. It is their personalities which shape events, and determine policies. People mould the structures: Augustus made the principate. Yet they are also altered themselves by the organisation: Tiberius, even with his great experience, was changed. The quest for motivation is crucial. From it follow moral judgments. By these

canons of assessment people are brought before us as either good or bad. "It seems to me", he wrote, "a historian's foremost duty to ensure that merit is recorded and to confront evil deeds and words with the fear of posterity's denunciations". (Ann. 3 65) At the same time Tacitus grasps the mental environment within which people live. That is not just a question of stating policies and describing characters it is rather the evocation of an atmosphere which though present is elusive. For example, Tacitus writes that during the terror of the treason trials people were afraid to hold conversations indoors and preferred to talk out in the open where there was less chance of being over-heard. The incident hits off the social climate precisely, as anyone who has worked for the Anglican Church in South Africa will know for themselves. One single item conveys the impact of the whole. This is why, despite all the conventions, his descriptions of battles make compelling reading. The whole is greater than the description of the parts. The drama is all. "What interests and stimulates readers", he wrote, "is a geographical description, the changing fortune of a battle, the glorious death of a commander."

The quotation sums up the discussion. What we have from his pen comes from a considered style of writing. What has been the subject of criticism stems not from weakness but from forethought. His military interest is inevitably associated with the progress of empire. There is a certain regret at the lack of an expansionist policy. Compared with earlier times it was a circumscribed inglorious field. "Tiberius was happier to have secured peace by prudent negotiation than if he had fought a victorious war". (Ann. 2 64) Public service has a hum-drum side/ⁱⁿ which it was not always easy to find a suitable theatre for the exercise of the traditional Roman virtutes, through which fama might be acquired. Such action, as there was, could easily be magnified both for the sake of dramatic contrast and to evoke the old ways of the lost republic. Tacitus is thought not to have stressed the blessings of imperial rule. Too often he is remarked for the words put into the mouth of Calgacus: "robbery, butchery and rapine they falsely call empire; and where they make a desert they call it peace." (Agr. 31). The sentence should be regarded, more properly, as sentiments proper to the enemy commander seeking to lift the morale of his troops, expressed with the skill of a master rhetorician, presenting both sides of the case. Tacitus hardly glosses the nature of Roman rule. If he draws attention to the defects of the emperors he also recognises the fears which the pax Romana evoked.

Syme argues, once more with great ingenuity, that if there is any lack of balance in the writings of Tacitus, it must be because he could assume the Roman peace, with its consequent concord and prosperity. It did not need to be stated because everybody knew it. Arguments from silence are rarely satisfying. They smack of special pleading. The conclusion of Richmond is preferable, because it deals with what is said and what is not said. He writes that Tacitus showed the double face of Roman rule. (35). One small point to be borne in mind is the evident admiration of Tacitus for northern barbarians in general on account not only of their valour but for their love of liberty. Perhaps they reminded him of the days when Rome was young and free. They heightened the picture of his own times by sharpening the contrasts.

The aura of doom is not, however, so easily dispersed. The Histories being concerned with the coups of the year inevitably concentrate upon a period of troubles. The Annals are a more extended and mature work. They portray a world with neither light nor hope. The bleakness of the age comes through most clearly. There is the forbidding presence of the emperor, the suspicions aroused by informers, the sudden prosecutions, the trumped up charges, the mysterious and sudden deaths, the suicides and a general feeling of insecurity. The set pieces convey all this and even subordinate clauses maintain the tension. Tiberius, we are told in an aside, had soldiers to escort him. (Ann. 1.7.) The military base of imperial power is hinted at and the continuing military atmosphere evoked, to be stressed from time to time later in the persons of the Praetorians and their commanders.

The harshness of the times is made worse by the use of rumour. The reader is given a hint about something and then told it has no substance; but the damage has been done. The suspicion has been aroused. "I should record a contemporary rumour... rumours always proliferate around the downfalls of the great.... My own motive in mentioning and refuting the rumour has been to illustrate by one conspicuous instance the falsity of hearsay gossip and to urge those who read this book not to prefer incredible tales - however widely current and readily accepted - to the truth unblemished by marvels" (Ann. 4.11.) After the death of Agricola it is rumoured that he was poisoned. Commiseration was enhanced by its persistence. "I would not venture to assert", he continues, "that we have any firm evidence." (Agri. 43.) The reader begins to suspect an ulterior transaction between himself and Tacitus. Though denied it has been implied. The cumulative effect of innuendo can be as persuasive as lucidly presented incontrovertible evidence.

However, to the contrary, we should note how large a place rumour holds in the affairs of men. Error, surmise and phrases misunderstood can produce a potent mixture, made, perhaps, the worse by dependence upon word of mouth within the confines of a fairly small social group: in this case the senatorial and equestrian classes resident within the orbits of the court and capital. The rumours of a society help determine its atmosphere as much as its overt acts. Account should, therefore, be taken of them. Their repeated use as part of a running criticism of the emperors makes a critical reader fear some special pleading.

Such writing does seem bound to tarnish the brightness of imperial rule and it adds to the opinion that Tacitus has not done justice to quality of life during the first century. Fundamentally the argument is that the history of the empire is more than the history of Rome and its upper classes and mob. While Tacitus was describing a period of almost continual metropolitan unrest the provinces enjoyed peace and prosperity, as a great deal of archaeological evidence shows. Once Rome is left behind there is a sunnier kind of life. The purges of Domitian disturbed few people in Britain or any other province for that matter, the argument continues. Thus if Tacitus had written within a different perspective and chosen different events to relate the picture would have been different. This is a difficult argument to refute. Had things been different then the impression given would have been different from what it was! Is the evidence so selective so as to be tantamount to wilful distortion? Perhaps it may be admitted that Tacitus did not aspire to write a history of the provinces, unlike Mommsen. He did not even try to compose a social and economic history of Rome. In his major works he treated of a year of political revolutions and gave an annalistic account of what seemed to him to be the most significant events in the empire during the first half of the first century. Within that framework the portrayal of character, the evaluation of events and people together with the description of the social atmosphere seems to be the major themes. He conveyed all three from his sources and from his knowledge of his own society. It was the world of the capital. But what was true of Rome might well have been true of the provinces. Could Roman governors, generals and administrative personnel have been independent of those who appointed them? The nature of imperial government made this largely impossible, as we shall see when the cursus honorum is studied. Nor could the native peoples escape the consequences of imperial policies. The shadows of intrigue and suspicion could not help but fall over those who worked in provincial administration. To think that things might be different in the provinces is to overthrow the principle of

accountability so evident in Roman history. The impact may have been less severe and immediate but the tension and the resultant insecurity cannot have been absent. It seems to be generally agreed that the revolt of Boudicca was sparked off by decisions made in Rome and turned into a conflagration by the harsh ineptitude of procuratorial staff.

A study of the corn measure found at Carvoran, with the name of Domitian excised, makes the point more vividly, and illustrates what cannot be argued from the archaeological evidence. Once the measure had been used with Domitian's name on it, then it had been obliterated and, perhaps, put to use again. Somebody had to give an order for the name to be removed. Archaeology does not tell us how or by whom. It is unthinkable that within an army it could have been done on local initiative. It must have come down the chain of command originating in the resolution that damned his memory. At each level of the chain the recipient had to be clear that it was a legitimate order that he received and was required to transmit. It also had to be acceptable to him personally. This is always an important factor, and never more so than in times of political upheaval. Who would be accountable if questions were asked about what had been done? The action makes clear that events in Rome had their effect upon the minds of government officials and army personnel and that must have rubbed off to some degree onto the natives themselves; not least, perhaps, in the way they were actually treated. It is the written sources rather than archaeological ~~that~~ convey the mental state. It might be inferred archaeologically but it is not a very sensitive instrument. Thus, if we had no literary evidence about the life of the capital during the first century, covered by Tacitus, archaeology would tell of a great city, which enjoyed a prosperity far greater than that of any of the provinces. We might then conclude that those who lived there at that time enjoyed the best of all possible worlds. When the literary evidence is examined it becomes apparent that this could hardly have been possible. Fear was a significant element and it must have had its effect upon the quality of life itself.

The dominant power of the princeps overshadowed them all. A kind of cruel necessity had made the devolution of power into the hands of one man necessary. Tacitus conveys this not only explicitly but implicitly in extended pieces of writing which convey the feelings of fear and suspicion with which a reader can identify, perhaps out of his own experience. Since the provincial evidence for a life more relaxed and happier than that of Rome is almost entirely archaeological, perhaps, too much should not be inferred from the artefacts about the mental quality of life there.

In both cases the material level of life may be clear enough but to infer happiness from these remains alone would be dangerous. We shall see, on a number of occasions, throughout this study how the apparent vacillation of the central government may well have inhibited the policies of the governors of Britain. The empire was a leviathan with the brain centre at Rome which directed all the parts and determined, thereby, their state of being.

1.5. TACITUS AND OTHER HISTORIANS OF THE FIRST CENTURY

It may be that enough has been written to raise, in the reader's mind, the question whether Tacitus should be regarded as a reliable historian. How does he compare with other writers of the same period? He is in fact virtually the only historian we have.

Suetonius (born about 69) was primarily a biographer, who wrote within a fairly rigid framework, one of whose effects is to make it difficult to understand the context within which certain anecdotes occurred. These vivid touches add variety and individuality to the text, like the parables of the New Testament, which have also lost their sitz im leben, in many cases. Nevertheless, the stories do throw a certain light upon one or two events in Roman Britain but, in general, the works of Suetonius are hardly comparable with those of Tacitus.

Dio Cassius (born about 160) wrote a comprehensive history of Rome, but as with Tacitus, a considerable portion is missing, while other parts survive in an abbreviated form. There are, indeed, sections dealing with Britain, to which reference will be made in the appropriate sections. They are not without their usefulness. However, we cannot be sure of Dio's sources. He may have been dependent, in large measure, upon Tacitus himself. At all events he can hardly have ignored him. Furthermore, it must surely be assumed that he possessed Tacitus's full text, which we lack, and which must inhibit, to some degree, our comparison of the two.

We are left, then, with Tacitus as virtually our only significant literary source. He is nearer to the times of which he writes; his works are more detailed and greater in scope than those of other writers. Insofar as comparisons can be made it is not with other literary but with archaeological sources. Even then the connecting points are tantalisingly few; but where they do occur the veracity of Tacitus is confirmed. An inscription giving a summary of a speech delivered by Claudius is strikingly similar to Tacitus's report of it. (36). "He is easily the best literary source for the events of the early Principate that we possess. On him, therefore, we have to rely for our knowledge of a critical epoch in the history of

western civilization." (37)

1.6. TACITUS AS A HISTORIAN

Perhaps this last point has just prevented the reader from asking whether Tacitus should be regarded as a historian at all. Much that seems to have been written appears to have treated him as a dramatist writing in narrative form or considered him as a moralist teaching through historical examples. By looking for types and symbols as well as the effect of the gits im leben much that seemed to be clear has become cloudy and things that seemed certain have disappeared. Tacitus could be going the way of the writers of the New Testament!

Too much scope should not be allowed, however, to these acts of scholarly ingenuity. They stem, for the most part, from a serious attempt to find out whether anything fresh can be gleaned from the text, if it is studied in another way. However, if they are allowed full rein they can dissolve much of the material and produce scepticism which doubts whether anything can be known at all about the past. History then becomes a problem of knowledge.

No historian writes without bias. Indeed nobody writes without a bias of some kind. That is because "history is not an exact science but an interpretation of human affairs" and so "opinion and varieties of opinion intrude as inevitable factors". Bias is therefore any personal interpretation of historical events. (38). The skill in interpretation lies in both recognising and allowing for it. Because history may be considered contemporary history it does not follow that there is no knowledge of the past. While it is true that one cannot have immediate or existential experience of the past, it may be possible in a second-hand or derived way. The reign of Tiberius, for example, is not inevitably the Lilliput to the rule of Domitian. Tacitus thought that he was writing history and not allegory of some kind. His dislike of Domitian, in which he was not alone, comes through the pages of the Agriicola very clearly. To extend it as a typology for use in the Annals is questionable and unnecessary in the Historias. It may be that contemporary events, at the time of their composition, sharpened the historian's wit and so added venom to his political ideas but it would be rash to infer either fabrication or distortion. Even his use of rumour, which produces a most insidious effect, should not be reckoned totally against Tacitus. Whether we call it rumour, gossip or "back-ground briefing" such talk is a significant element in social and political life. People, including those who are not actually managing the levers of power, do discuss public affairs together. They

make assumptions, infer conclusions and mark out probabilities. The contents of none of these transactions may be correct but if they become prevalent they acquire a certain authority, of which account must be taken in the end. Rumour sometimes acquires such force that it does affect the properties of a situation. Agricola may not have been poisoned by Domitian but perhaps few would have been surprised had he been guilty of the deed. The force of the rumour shows the degree to which the Emperor was alienated from the senatorial class.

However, we have but an indirect concern with these matters. Our interest lies in those aspects of Tacitean studies which we can use for the study of Roman Britain. These other matters have significance insofar as they illuminate that subject. We shall see later on that a good deal can be gleaned from Tacitus and that the quest need not end in scepticism. It is just because so much may be inferred that the task is the more difficult and thus the results are made somewhat more unsure. How much easier it would have been if only he had written a political or historical testament! Unfortunately there is no such source available to us. We have to work from his writings and the references to him, few as they are, in Latin literature, together with a little epigraphic evidence.

1.7. CONCLUSION

We may summarise this section about Tacitus the man thus: He was born into an equestrian family that probably came from Narbonensis or at least from Gallic lands. Having been admitted into the senatorial order he followed a career in the public service, during which he acquired a considerable reputation as an orator. During the reign of Nerva he turned to historical studies, stimulated initially by his experience of the emperor Domitian, who~~x~~ he thought treated his father in law, Agricola, badly. Thereafter, while not abandoning his political career, he produced a series of brilliantly written works. By his unremitting criticism of the emperors it is assumed that he disapproved of monarchical rule on the grounds that it was bad for the man himself and for those over whom he ruled. He seems to have longed for the days of the old republic, even though he recognised the necessity of the principate. At the same time he was deeply concerned with human motivation, so that periodically he writes like a moralist. He was no optimist. The Roman political world is bleak and unenlivened by hope. The intensity of his writings seems to make^{it} unlikely that he was, in fact, a poseur. It was indeed a world of strife and tension, at many times; nor could it be assumed that justice would prevail. The exercise of power by frail men prevents such an equitable result. The gods rarely appear in

the works of Tacitus but he has one significant comment about them: they appear to be more concerned with the punishment of men than with their welfare. It is, therefore, an inconsistent world. "The more I think about history, ancient and modern", he wrote, "the more ironical all human affairs seem". (Annals 3.18.)

This, then is the context within which the historian of Roman Britain must handle the works of Tacitus. The province appears within a non-British frame of reference, confined to particular episodes rather than in the form of a continuous narrative, except for the Agriicola. It raises our expectations and we should examine it in more detail.

FOOTNOTES.

(1) This is a term used by R.G.Collingwood to describe the construction of "a patchwork history whose materials were drawn from 'authorities', that is, from the works of previous historians who had already written the histories of particular societies at particular times." See R.G.Collingwood. The Idea of History. Oxford. 1946. p.33.

(2) The Teach yourself history series proceeded very much in this fashion. The history of a nation at a particular time was built round a single important individual. Roman Britain was dealt with in a single volume dealing with the other three and a half centuries. They were dealt with in six and a half pages at the end of the book. The writing was redeemed by the quality of the author's presentation. A.R.Burn. Agriкола and Roman Britain. London. 1st.ed. 1953

(3) Collingwood op.cit. pp.215-216.

(4) "In order to find out his (the historian's) meaning you must also know what the question was (a question in his own mind and presumed by him to be in yours) to which the thing he has said or written was meant as an answer". R.G.Collingwood. An Autobiography. Oxford. 1939. p.31.

(5) L. Hodgson. For Faith and Freedom. London. 1963. vol.1. p.88.

It seems clear from a number of references in these Gifford Lectures for 1955-57 that Hodgson had read Collingwood and accepted at least a number of his ideas. The references are both favourable and personal.

(6) Book 1 Letter 6 ; 1.20; 2.1.; 2.11; 4.13; 4.15; 6.9; 16.6; 6.20; 7.20; 7.33; 8.7; 8.10; 9.14; 9.23.

(7) Verginius Rufus had been consul three times. In 68 he had suppressed the revolt of Vindex, as army commander in Upper Germany. Thereafter he refused to allow his troops to acclaim him as emperor. He lived to be 83 surviving the "terror of Domitian". Pliny. Letters. 2.1; 6.10.

(8) Furneaux and Anderson argue for 54-56 and conclude that it was probably 55 - a half way house. ed. H. Furneaux & J. G. C. Anderson. Agricola Oxford, 2nd. ed. 1922. Grant chooses 55. M. Grant. On Imperial Rome. London 1956. Syme states that the year of birth was either 56 or 57. R. Syme. Tacitus. Oxford. 1958. Ogilvie and Richmond agree with Syme ed. R. M. Ogilvie & I. A. Richmond. Agricola. Oxford. 1967.

(9) Natural History. 17. 16. 76.

(10) Syme *op. cit.* p. 615.

(11) CIL. XII. 1301, 1517, 3515, 5691⁸.

(12) Dessau ILS 1321, and 979. Burrus had been an equestrian procurator under Livia, Tiberius and Claudius who appointed him praefectus praetorio.

(13) Syme *op. cit.* p. 623 footnote 4; p. 614.

(14) "Tacitus exhibits a keen interest in the Rhineland; he has accurate knowledge of odd details about Colonia Claudia; and he carefully registers certain transactions round about 55-58." Syme *loc. cit.* p. 614. On the other hand if that is where important events were taking place, then, we should expect them to be treated at some length, with details, enlivened, perhaps by smaller points for relief.

(15) Pactus Thrasea was a Stoic who retired from public life as a protest against the servility and corruption rampant in the Senate during the later years of Nero. He was finally prosecuted for maiestas and committed suicide. Strabo declared that Padua the town from which Pactus came had a strong moral sense and sense of personal dignity.

(16) ILS 8379a.

(17) E. Koestermann, Athenaeum. 43. 1965. p. 167ff.

(18) Syme *op. cit.* p. 613.

(19) Syme, *op.cit.*, Ogilvie and Richmond, *loc.cit.* all prefer either 81 or 82. Furneaux and Anderson prefer sometime between 79 and 81, *loc.cit.*

(20) Syme. *op.cit.* p.68.

(21) Grant. *op.cit.* p.11;14. *The Agricola*

(22) For a consideration of a senator's career pattern, see below: p. 36

(23) For a fuller treatment of the date of the Agricola, see below p.31.

(24) The importance of this reign of terror is examined below.

There seems to be little doubt that Domitian was possessed of absolutist tendencies and came to power somewhat embittered. However it was not until after the rebellion of L.Antonius Saturninus in 86 that he became more ruthless and increasingly spilled blood.

(25) It is interesting to note the comparison with the actions of some former members of the administration of the former President Nixon after the Watergate Affair. While in office the "game" was played out. Afterwards there was explanation and expressions of regret.

(26) Syme *op.cit.* p.125.

(27) See Agricola 4.2. and 39.4. at which points Tacitus draws attention to the provincial simplicity of Massilia and the unobtrusive nature of Agricola's retirement.

(28) Syme *op.cit.* p.13.

(29) It is possible that when the Agricola was published that the political upheavals had not taken their full effect and that it took a little time for their full implications to become clear.

(30) The Roman attitude to public service and private life is clearly explained in D.Earl. The Moral and Political Tradition of Rome. London 1967.

(31) See also Annals 6.38.: "I have merged the events of two summers to allow some respite from Roman miseries".

- (32) K. Wellesley. Tacitus as a military historian p.63 in ed. T.A. Dorey. Tacitus. London 1969. And A.R. Burn Tacitus on Britain p.60 in the same volume.
- (33) See above p. 2 for an examination of the historical process.
- (34) See Annals 12.33; 13.56; Histories 4. 73; Agricolae 30.7.
- (35) Syme op. cit. and JRS xxxiv p.34 ff.
- (36) See CIL. 13.1. 1668 and compare with Annals II 23 - 24.
It is quite clear that the speech has been radically recast, without being inaccurate in total impact. The superiority of Tacitus's version, artistically, to the inscription is apparent to the reader but it achieves the result by rearrangement and conciseness rather than by imagination and free composition. See ed. H. Furneaux. Annals. Oxford 1907. p. 55.
- (37) Grant op. cit. p. 9.
- (38) G.M. Trevelyan. An Autobiography and other essays. London. 1949. p.68. ff.

SECTION 2.

THE AGRICOLA

2.1. Its place in the works of Tacitus.

2.2. Its nature and purpose.

2.3. The value of the *Agricola*.

2.4. Analysis of its contents.

2.5. The Senatorial Career.

2.6. The Career of *Agricola*.

2.7. The attributes for success.

Footnotes.

2.1. ITS PLACE IN THE WORKS OF TACITUS

It is generally agreed that the Agricola is an early work; probably the first, written in 98 (Agri. 3.1.) This was the same year in which the Germania was composed, but was written before it if Agri. 3.2-3 means that Tacitus had written nothing before it. The references to Domitian make it clear that it could not have been published in the life-time of the emperor; nor could much of it have been used as the funeral panegyric for Agricola himself, who died while Domitian still ruled. Topicality would be lost, however, if publication were delayed much beyond the assassination of 96. It may be assumed that the work was published early in the reign of Trajan. He is mentioned but not as divus. Trajan appears as one who is "daily increasing the happiness of the times." (Agri. 3.1.) Put together these points might indicate that Tacitus was writing while Nerva was alive and after Trajan had been adopted as his successor. Thus the date of publication is to be placed between end of October 97 when Trajan was nominated and 25th January 98 when Nerva died.

A certain caution might be registered about the date. Literary conventions are not always either infallible or invariable. Pliny in his Panegyricus refers to Nerva once as divus but five times without the epithet. So in Agricola c. 44 Trajan is written ^{of} as princeps. This may mean that he was emperor (since the title does not seem to have been used of one who was Caesar) for Trajan could not have been so mentioned with propriety during the life-time of his predecessor. It is not unreasonable to conclude 1. that the Agricola was published early in the rule of Trajan and 2. that it was largely written during the principate of Nerva. The work came before the public, then, about four and a half years after the death of its subject, because Agricola died on 23rd August 93. There was, thus, ample time for the revision and amplification of any material that Tacitus might have used had he delivered the funeral address.

The Agricola is therefore the first historical work of a distinguished orator and politician who composed it at the prime of life, while reaching the height of his career, but when he was also something of an apprentice to the profession of historian.

2.2. ITS NATURE AND PURPOSE

There is no proof, however, that the Agricola had its origins in the literary form of the panegyric pronounced at the funeral of famous men,

but the temptation to assume it often seems to be almost irresistible. Would the family have invited anybody else when the dead man's son in law was one of the foremost orators of the day? The social and political conditions of the time might well have decided them against such an invitation!

If, then, it could be shown that the structure and content of the Agricola followed the conventional form of such panegyrics, it might be inferred reasonably that it was here that the work had its origin. Obituary notices were composed under these heads: reference was made to a person's family, background, financial and marital achievements, his spirit and capacity. Thus the traditional Roman virtues of fama, virtus, animus and ingenium were covered. Finally the panegyric closed with remarks about the person's ability as an orator and perhaps one or two other slight points. (1.).

The reader will at once perceive that Tacitus deals with all these headings, in varying degrees, during the course of the work. It would be hard for any biography to avoid them. (2.). The argument therefore is hardly conclusive.

Perhaps the Agricola should be regarded as an eulogy. Here again there were standard conventions derived from Greek models. Unless there were special factors one might reasonably expect a son in law to write an encomium of his father in law if he writes a work about him! However, if the Agricola is a biography in a laudatory style a degree of scepticism will be proper for its use in the history of Roman Britain. There could be a glossing over of events at some points, and some alterations at others, with a view to giving the subject the most favourable interpretation. Polybius had occasion to remark that matters dealt with in an encomium must be given extended treatment in histories because the former was committed to praise whereas the latter aimed to give both a true account of events and demonstrate their causal connexion. Tacitus does not pay any attention to any defects that Agricola might have had. If not eulogistic, within the literary conventions of the day, it certainly has idealistic overtones, which will repay careful examination.

Sallust may be influential in the composition of the Agricola. There is evidence of his influence upon Tacitus's prose style. (3.) His forms of writing may have been absorbed as well. The Bellum Iacurthinum and Catiline bear some resemblance to the Agricola. The former are biographical studies rather than biography and the latter clearly has more in it than biographical information. For example, there is the ethnographic

and geographical section, together with the survey of the earlier history of the province. We may admit, therefore, that the Agricola is something of a hybrid: a mixture of biography and history. (4.) However, a good deal depends upon what is thought to constitute biography. A certain allowance must be made, first of all, for the creativity of Tacitus. He is not necessarily the sum of his Greek and Latin predecessors, respected as they may be. Whatever deviations apparently occur can be shown to be related to his subject: Agricola. The geographical background sets the scene. The previous history of the province puts Agricola in perspective. The battle scenes give colour and a change of pace to the narrative. The introverted character of the emperor heightens the personality of Agricola himself and suggests a brooding sinister background presence throughout the governorship. Dramatically, the Battle at Mons Graupius is the climax of the book; the summation of the policy prosecuted over seven years. Within whatever kind of framework, we may consider it demonstrated the virtus of Agricola and established his fama. If the actual conduct of the Battle of El Alamein is as relevant to the biography of Viscount Montgomery as its result, then so is Mons Graupius to Agricola. It was the last action of a great public servant for whom the rest of his life was spent in unnecessary retirement. The biographical nature of the work stands out clearly, whatever affinities may also be found with other literary forms. The conclusion also accords with the stated intention of the author, for which some place ought to be found. (Agri.1.4.) Nonetheless, the idealistic nature of the writing cannot help but strike the reader. Agricola is a man without blemishes. No other character appears in the works of Tacitus so untouched by weaknesses. For this some explanation must be found. The eulogy may afford some reason for this. But is it only a man who is being idealised? It could be that the work is an apologia for a whole group of people who entered government service and remained in office during the reign of Domitian. Enough has already been written to demonstrate the effect upon Tacitus of the latter years of his rule. During that time many people remained in office and not a few survived by the practice of silence, modestia and obsequium. The Agricola, as a whole may be regarded as a tribute to them and constitute a reminder that good things can be done even in a state ruled by an evil autocrat. As Richmond has written, the book stands in a significant relationship to the political background. (5.) Nonetheless the strong personal feeling of the writer comes through in the last chapter where Agricola

is designated pius: the highest praise to which a Roman could aspire. He was a good general and an able governor with high intelligence whose every capacity was allied not only to self-effacement but to loyalty to the state. Here may be the clue to the meaning of the Agricola. The book portrays the ideal governor. It is a handbook on leadership written in personal form. The character and capabilities attitudes and attributes to which a public servant should aspire are written into an account of the career of the author's father in law. The Agricola could usefully have been put into the hands of a young man entering the vigintivirate. The steps of the career are clearly marked. The role content is described together with the attributes necessary for its discharge. Civil administration takes its place alongside military affairs. Attention is drawn not only to the semi-automatic promotions on the lower rungs of the cursus honorum, but to the element of personal choice by the emperor, in particular, in the higher ranks. Though a man might have the capacity and the willingness to serve he might be passed over and denied his just rewards. Inner integrity and the ideal of self-less public service constituted the only certain, if inner, reward. "Tacitus places the governor of imperial times in the tradition of the great republican conquerors and demonstrates to the Romans of the principate a way forward from the disastrous inertia which threatened to dominate them entirely." (6.)

Behind the description of role content and personal attributes lies a clear presupposition about overall policy: the expansion of the state should be the aim of the ideal governor. This pursuit, alone, gives adequate scope for the exercise of virtutes and the opportunity for their reward. We may now see why Britain is important in the eyes of Tacitus. After Augustus decided to hold the boundaries of empire and Tiberius came to prefer peaceful diplomacy to war the opportunities for such display were limited. The invasion and conquest of Britain was the principal theatre for their attainment. The province was ferox and thus the field on which fama could be won through a suitable ingenium militare. Hence the importance of Agricola's years of campaign by which many tribes were brought into the orbit of empire. Thereafter the province was also the territory in which Roman life and ways could be brought into existence through the exercise of integritas and iustitia.

The fact that Agricola never appears elsewhere in the surviving works of Tacitus and that Britain lies on the side-line of imperial politics do not matter. Agricola was the representative governor and Britain the representative province for the ideal, style and characteristics necessary,

in the eyes of Tacitus, for true public servants. If, then, Agricola, is the ikon of the legatus augusti it becomes necessary once more to enquire behind the persona or prosonon to see if reliable information can be given to us about Roman Britain through the pages of the Agricola. In particular, has Tacitus been able to draw upon the personal observations of his father in law and so give us some kind of first hand account of Britannia?

2.3. THE VALUE OF THE AGRICOLAS

What then is the value of the work? If everything Tacitus writes about the reign of Domitian is true, then we might think that Agricola and Tacitus would both have a certain reserve about a candid exchange of views relating to Britain, the governorship and subsequent retirement. In times of terror it can often be public affairs that are not talked about within a family for fear of spies even within the household. Agricola's career might have been over but that of Tacitus clearly was not. Both might have feared arrest in any case. Even innocent conversations about public affairs could be twisted to destroy people. Domestic and general subjects might not be affected quite so much. So, there is the observation, which probably came from Agricola, about his early predilection for philosophy and his mother's prompt action in dealing with it. The general shape of North Britain and configuration of the Scottish coastline which Tacitus describes might have originated in the descriptions of Agricola. However, we must remember that Agricola himself did not circumnavigate Britain so that it is possible that the information came from an officer of the fleet. The descriptions of military stratagems and of urban policy might have come from Agricola himself, if not directly then through the file copies in the archives. The asides about romanization being merely a form of enslavement, (Agri.21) seem characteristically Tacitean. The possibility of his being Governor of Syria could relate equally to club-land gossip as to a domestic conversation. His withdrawal as a candidate for the proconsulship of Asia might be interpreted in a variety of ways. Brow-beating is one, but a fixed determination to remain retired is another. Once out of Britain Agricola maintained a life of quiet and silence. Cumulatively the impression is given of circumspection of a high order during the later years of his life which coincided with the terrors of Domitian. If one knew of the dangers of reminiscences, the other doubtless appreciated the risks of the untimely question. Thus, it might be that the extent to which Tacitus drew directly upon the memories of Agricola could be

limited: perhaps a point about northern geography, some analysis of his opponents' military equipment, and tactics, statements of ration strengths and other logistics, - that might be about all. The rest could have come from other literary sources or first hand discussion, and the official archives. On this material Tacitus could place his own interpretation and shape it for his own purposes. The historian of Roman Britain will always need to remember that his own perspective is different from that of Tacitus and that the Agricola is a refractory text for his purpose.

2.4. AN ANALYSIS OF THE CONTENTS.

Of the 46 chapters 7 are devoted to introductory and concluding material, with 3 chapters alone devoted to the death of Agricola. His birth and youth take 1 chapter, and so do the combined offices of quaestor, tribune of the people and praetor. His appointment as legionary legate and governor of Aquitaine merit one chapter apiece. Previous governors warrant 2 chapters, Paulinus and the rebellion of Boudicca are given another 2. 3 are devoted to the condition of Britain; 1 to the policy of Romanization, and 10 to the set piece at Mons Graupius. Britain takes 28 of the 46 chapters in all. More than half the work is indeed devoted to Britain but nearly a fifth is given over to the final battle piece. The military element is clearly a major part of the work. Much of its significance must depend upon our assessment of the governorship of Agricola, not least in relation to his predecessors. This will also help us to determine the importance of the Battle at Mons Graupius. Together these elements suggest the character of the ideal governor. This is more important than the province administered. We ought then to understand the office in which Agricola displayed his virtutes. This will help us understand the subject, the author and the history of Roman Britain somewhat better.

2.5. THE SENATORIAL CAREER

How did a person such as Agricola come to be the Governor of a province such as Britain? What personal and official resources did the officeholder need? What did the Emperor think requisite in his lieutenants? If we can answer some of these questions we shall not only understand Agricola better but also gain some further insight into the history of the province.

The government of the empire comprised a number of administrative 'systems' (to use a ^{management} term) partly inter-related and partly in parallel but all of them came together in the household of the princeps. All powers

and authority were delegated. Only in him were they inherent. That was the Roman revolution consolidated after the Battle of Actium.

(Hist.1.1.) Personal rule, however, is dependent upon consent as well as sanctions. The monarch depends upon the loyalty of others to act for him. His will is implemented by subordinates with whom he has a mutual dependent relationship. In the end the rule of the princeps must be acceptable by those who implement it and are affected by it. If it is not, then, the coup d'etat becomes the engine of political change. Augustus had built his power upon the army which he had recruited and which swore personal loyalty to him. Once secure in power, he addressed himself to the governance of the res publica. Though operating with a certain modesty he concentrated in his own person the principal powers of the old republic. Thereafter he had need of advisers and assistants to execute his policies. The former were about him but the latter often had to be away in the provinces for extended periods. The selection of such men was of critical importance. An "overnight" subject could threaten the state and overthrow the sovereign; and an incompetent one could be equally dangerous.

The various provincial administrative systems were arranged in ranks having been derived from the republican magistracies and Pompey's method of appointing delegates with local powers. With all these we are not immediately concerned. Our interest lies in the section which involved Agricola; the high ranking post of legatus Augusti pro praetore. For the post it would seem as if some form of appropriate training and experience were required, coupled with the right kind of personal capacities, for the appointment was, as we shall see, a demanding one. Augustus had divided the provinces of the empire into two categories. 1. There were those which he had, as it were, handed back to the Senate and which thereby resumed the republican pattern of governance. This entailed an annual appointment, into a province which contained no troops, which no governor could legally raise. Had he done so it would have been regarded as high treason. If a military presence were required then he had to apply to the nearest imperial province. Even though he had been appointed by the Senate the governor was not free of imperial control for he received instructions from the emperor as did his opposite number in an imperial province. Thus the emperor did not fail to take an interest in Africa, Asia, Bactria^a, Gallia Narbonensis, Sicily, Sardinia, Illyricum, Achaia, Macedonia, Crete, Cyrene, Cyprus and Bithynia, it was merely that his methods here were

rather more indirect. 2. Some provinces the emperor reserved for his own direct personal attention, and these he governed through his legates plus some which were governed by procurators. (The latter were mainly small like Judaea and the Alps, but there were larger ones like Egypt and the Mauretaniae.) The main units of the army were stationed in these areas. Britain came into this second category. It was a major theatre of war during the second half of the first century, it contained either three or four legions and constituted a large tract of land in need of pacification and settlement. There were, in addition, numerous auxiliary units and a fleet, one of the few maintained by Rome. The Germanies and Pannonia also contained large forces. By the time Tacitus wrote it was clear that any of these armies and governors could overthrow the government in Rome. Thus, great care had to be taken about those who were appointed to high command in them.

It hardly seems possible for an emperor to have remained unaware of the political implications of the armies in the provinces. Provincial governorships were critical for the well being of the state and the safety of the emperor; thus it was not an area of government that a princeps would allow to rest in other hands. Epigraphy affords us records by which we are enabled to understand the steps of the career that reached its climax as a provincial governor of the most senior status. (7.). Those who were legati Augusti pro praetore invariably came from the senatorial class, into which they had been born or adopted. One may, therefore, refer appropriately to a senatorial cursus honorum and place it alongside that of the equestrians and of those below that rank, all of which had their distinctive characteristics.

A senator was vir clarissimus who began his career informed by the old Roman ideal of public service. Traditionally the business of this upper class was politics. (8.). The activity was to be carried on, however, by reference to certain clearly defined personal attributes. Of these the critical one was virtus: a word almost incapable of ^{an} equivalent, in English. The word meant the winning of pre-eminence and glory through the execution of great deeds in the service of the state. The opposites were ignavia and inertia; a refusal to play a part in politics. For a man to withdraw from public affairs to cultivate his own private interest was simply unfitting. Once virtus was invoked, gloria and fama were the means through which it was expressed. The latter is more of a neutral term than the former for it consisted mainly of what people said - reputation - and as such it may be either good or bad. Gloria, however, was much more positive for it consisted of fama transformed into praise

for right actions, which were particularly meritorious, because they were of service to the state. If these were the goals for achievement, the correlative attributes were ambitio and fides. A man must strive personally for a good end; that is true ambitio, rather than any form of self-seeking. He must establish his good faith on which all relationships must ultimately depend.

Time and chance affect all men. No one can escape the irrational and unpredictable nature of fortuna. It was felicitas that was needed here. Napoleon's question of any general is fundamental: Is he lucky? A man not only needed adequate capacities but also the right sort of conditions in which to display them. The opening chapter of the Historiae, and to some extent the beginning of the Agricolae, show how difficult all this might be in evil times; and the fate of Agricola himself displays a servant's dependence upon the character of his superior officer. On the other hand, there is a sense in which, at least among the perceptive people, a man's virtutes could be appreciated. Those who were rightly motivated could be carried forward by bonae artes and would reap their reward. These social skills depended heavily on both modestia and obsequium. Obedience to lawfully constituted authority was crucial and a lack of self-display an adornment to the good man.

If the emperor needed able men, they required an appropriate field for action. The administration of the provinces proved to be a large enough field for their abilities, and enough to stimulate the desire for the supreme office among some. They upheld the state whether the emperor was an unstable juvenile, a scholar or a repressed sadist. Even when the emperors were themselves odd, the appointments to these governorships did not become crazy. There was a quiet, steady, hidden sanity about the imperial provincial administration. The system proved to be better than its occasional personification. Thus it was that the same sort of men were appointed throughout our period of study, even though we cannot be sure of the exact procedures through which they were appointed. The emperor could not have known personally all six hundred members of the senate, who were expected to progress through this series of offices, with the exception of the consulship (to which all could not aspire). Reliance must have been placed in part upon recommendations whether by officials for their subordinates or by ~~those~~ who asked for their friends and relatives. No doubt corruption and favouritism were not absent either; but much of all this is hidden from our eyes.

Augustus and his successors had continued the republican system of leges annales in a modified form, which governed the ages at which the traditional magistracies (quaestorship, tribune of the plebs, aedileship, praetorship and consulship) could be held. Augustus gave a year's remission to each aspirant who was a parent, in order to encourage child birth. This could bring someone, like Agricola, to office earlier than would otherwise have been the case. We deal first with the pre-senatorial stage of the cursus honorum. Entry into the senate was controlled by the emperor, who could confer the latus clavus on suitably qualified aspirants. There was no admission into the senate before the age of 24. Before this time there were two posts to be held as preliminary stages. The first of which appears to have been compulsory, but probably, not the second.

The starting point for the young man in his teens was the vigintivirate. This was divided into four boards of minor magistracies:

(i) III viri auro argento flando feriendo or III viri monetales.

They were concerned with the minting of coins. During the early part of the reign of Augustus the moneyers' names appeared on the coins, as they had in the days of the Republic, but thereafter it is not known whether they had any real role in the mint. From the reign of Claudius to that of Severus Alexander all patricians were monetales, so any plebians who also succeeded to this board might be considered to enjoy the special favour of the emperor.

(ii) IV viri viarum curandarum. These men were concerned with the streets of the capital and may have assisted the aediles.

(iii) X viri stlitibus ^{indicandis} who were attached to the Centumviral court.

(iv) III viri capitales who assisted the judicial magistrates and were concerned with capital cases.

The tasks which they were expected to perform are not known in detail. They could hardly have carried much responsibility. Perhaps they were like personal assistants, saving work for senior men while getting an insight into administration. They were thus introduced into the imperial service. The main work must have been in the hands of an experienced secretariat; but this is surmise based on administrative experience. Cassius Dio states that a law of 1380 made the holding of one of these posts compulsory for prospective senators. A number of inscriptions relating to the cursus omit the vigintivirate; but whether they were excused, omitted the post or did not have to hold the office we cannot tell. The trend is clear enough. It

was the normal start for the overwhelming number of men known to us in the service of the emperor at senatorial level.

Within the vicintivirate there were certain weightings. X viri may, perhaps, have been of higher social standing. That would show status rather than estimated capacity. It would seem as though a higher percentage of IV viri got the highest appointments in the imperial service. III viri monetales seem to have some imperial favour and perhaps could expect it in the years ahead. III viri capitales had no such expectation. We do not know in which group Agricola served and thus we do not know what kind of patronage he had secured. However, since he arrived at the consulship by a short route, we could infer that he had good backers, or was of exceptional ability - or more cynically that the Flavians were so short of good men that they had to bring on whom they could to fill the posts of empire! The next stage was the post of military tribune. This was the almost invariable practice. There were over 20 legions to which they might go. However, not all future senators held the tribunate. Perhaps there were as many as eight out of twenty in any given year who did not do so. On the other hand there were some who served in more than one legion. Hadrian, for example, served in three; but two was perhaps more normal. Some were tribunes to close relatives. It seems probable from this practice that senior officers were able to recommend appointees to the emperor; so no doubt the influence of friends and clients was brought to bear upon them, when the time came for them to make submissions. There is, therefore, no need to assume that imperial initiative was normative; though, doubtless, it occurred from time to time. The length of service in the legion was probably about two to three years. A single year would have been somewhat inefficient. Furthermore, with the number of men available in relation to the number of posts available, some career pacing would seem to be inevitable. The age at which the young men entered the military service is not clear. It was probably about 19-20. As tribunes they were technically seconds in command of the legions. However, lest it should seem as though the legate was served by an inexperienced youth, we should remember that the other five tribunes were equestrians who had arrived at that level after an extended period of service. They supplied the experience which was lacking in the laticlavus and which might even need supplementation in the legate. This would be the case particularly where the tribunate was the only military appointment held before a man became legatus legionis and also legatus Augusti, in a province where there might be a number of troops stationed.

We know of very few cases where a man returned to command the legion in which he had been tribune or indeed even returned to the same province. Nor did they normally govern provinces where there were armies in which they had held the tribunate. Agricola again was something of an exception. He held his tribunate, legateship and governorship all in Britain. This might, in the end, have had a bearing on the extent to which the emperor thought that he could be usefully employed elsewhere.

At 25 the young man could hold the quaestorship. This was between 5 and 7 years after entering the vigintivirate, during which period he had both gained civilian and military experience and been in contact with a number of senior government officials and officers. Since there were 20 quaestors elected each year all entrants into the vigintivirate could, in due course, assume the office. Any deficiency caused by death or loss of property could be made up by late entrants. The quaestors were divided into groups: (i) 10 for the proconsuls of the senatorial provinces, allocated by lot. Their tenure of office began on 5 December but their proconsuls did not enter office until 1 July, so they must have spent some time in Rome before setting out to their new duties. During this waiting period they had to provide, with the other quaestors, the games which took place in late December. They and the other categories were mainly financial officers.

(ii) Quaestor urbanus was the title of one group which remained in Rome during their period of office. During the Republic there had been two men with this title and it is generally assumed that this practice continued, though in fact the constancy of the numbers is far from certain. Their duties included supervision of the aerarium Saturni. But since they lost this task during the principate the numbers may well have varied.

(iii) Quaestores consulares. There may have been four of them, 2 to each consul.

(iv) Quaestores augusti. It is often assumed that there were two of them; but all we can be certain of is that there were more than one. (After the time of Antoninus Pius this title disappeared and was replaced by quaestor candidatus Caesaris.)

The role of the quaestor was akin to that of personal assistants. Those assigned to the Emperor were required, if necessary, to read speeches in the Senate. Once again here was an appointment that gave men an insight into the workings of government, which stretched their capacities but did not burden them with any final executive responsibilities. Agricola got a quaestorship by lot in Asia, one of the senatorial provinces.

Between the quaestorship and the praetorship there seems to have been a

statutory 5 year interval, meaning that a man could come to the latter office in his 30th year. During that period he might become either tribunus plebis or aedile. He might, however, be completely at leisure. Patricians were, by definition, precluded from the post of tribunus plebis or aedilis plebis. They were also exempt from the other post intermediate between the quaestorship and the praetorship: aedilis curulis. A few men held two quaestorships but this may be accounted for by unexpected deaths and the necessity of securing a replacement. Periodically we find men who have been adlecti inter quaestorios; but that is more characteristic of the second than the first century, with which we are concerned. Such men were exempted from holding the quaestorship. Some found serious occupation as legatus to a proconsul. 14 were required each year and though most of them were drawn from the praetorians a number were taken from among the ex-quaestors and ex-tribunes. Finally a number could serve as VI vir equitum Romanorum at the annual parade for the review of the knights. This was an annual event and though an honorific post, it was thought worthy of mention by over 100 senators. There were 10 tribunes and 6 aediles in office each year. Thus, of the 20 quaestors, from two years earlier, one or two must have failed to secure election; since it seems unlikely that there were 4 patricians entering the Senate every year. Some, at least, of those who failed to secure election may have been allowed to omit the office by adlectio inter tribunicios or aedilicios. The emperor might confer this status upon equestrians who had not been through the earlier stages. The most favoured men in each year were elected as candidatus Caesaris, with the emperor's backing.

The appointments mentioned here became more and more ornamental rather than functional. They were a ceremonial way of marking time before the senior magistracy was reached at the age of 30, when a man could become praetor.

During the course of the 1st century the number of praetorships rose from 12 in AD 14 to 18 by the end of the century. Early deaths and withdrawals from public life, with the addition of adlecti together with the return to competition of patricians may well have meant that those who sought the office would generally get it. Once again, the most favoured, including all the patricians, were candidati Caesaris. There were a number of men in the Senate who had omitted the office by adlection, together with a number of new men who were brought in with the rank of ex-praetor.

After the praetorship a patrician could look forward to the consulship at 31 or a little after. In such cases they were virtually excluded from any of the intervening appointments which were reserved for ex-praetors. These were:

- (A) At Rome: 2 praefecti frumenti dandi,
3 praefecti aerarii militaris,
2 praefecti aerarii Saturni
- (B) In Italy: 9 curatores viarum
praefecti alimentorum: number uncertain, and sometimes held with the above. Trajan created the post.
4-5 iuridici
- (C) In the provinces: (i) Imperial: 24 legati legionum,
5, then 8, then 12 then 14
legati Augusti pro praetore;
2 iuridici (Britain & Tarraconensis)
& a 3rd. c.70-114 in Galatia-Cappadocia.
(ii) Senatorial: 14 legati pro praetore,
8 proconsula.
- (D) In Italy and the provinces: an unknown number of curatores civitatum; the numbers were also variable.
- (E) General: a variety of special posts created on an ad hoc basis.

In practice about half of all ex-praetors were required to command a legion. Some moved to the command immediately after holding the magistracy; but some held another appointment first. The post was almost inescapable when patricians were excluded, and account made for death and illness. The appointments do not seem to have been controlled by the provincial governors.

A number of men, however, moved to the consulship by what might be termed "the rapid path". This was the holding of only two significant posts after the praetorship and before the consulship. These were, normally, a legionary command and the governorship of an imperial province, or its equivalent. Both appointments might be of three years duration or slightly less, so that a man might gain the fascēs within about 8 years. If through the ius liberorum he had gained a year or two's advantage he might be consul at 36 - 5 years earlier than the prescribed 42. On the whole these men were a minority. Most senators held well over two posts.

The praetorian provinces grew under the principate, as a result of additions to the empire, changes of status in provinces and the subdivision of territories. Other praetorian posts varied. The cura viarum varied in status: Thus senior praetorii were given the viae Aemilia, Appia and Flaminia. Other roads were given to those who had been praetorians not long before. The duration of the post is not known. The iuridici were, on the whole, relatively junior. The praefectura frumenti dandi seems to have lacked status and to have been held by men without prospects in the imperial service. The treasury appointments differed in status. The three prefects of the military treasury were junior to the two men in that of Saturn, as far as status was concerned, even though a minority went on straight to the consulship without any other intervening office. The prefects of the treasury of Saturn seems to have been assured of direct passage to the consulship. Both prefectures seem to have been held for three years. There were two consuls each year. Augustus created the suffect consulship, as an institution, practising regularly what had been casual and occasional before. Throughout this period their number increased, thus making it possible for more men to hold the fascēs. Under the Flavians there may have been as many as 7 or 8 and later on it went higher still. Normally, however, about half of the expraetors could expect to become consul; though they would have to compete with those who had been adlected. Patricians would succeed sooner than others who might have to wait 10 years or more for the honour. Only two could hold the post of consul ordinarius which was therefor more restricted and made worse by the occasions on which the emperor or his kinsman held the magistracy, together with some who held it more than once. Most of these men were the sons of consuls.

The posts available for consulars were:

- (A) At Rome: 1 curator alvei Tiberis;
 2 curatores operum publicorum;
 1 curator aquarum;
 1 praefectus urbi.
- (B) In Italy: 1 praefectus alimentorum
- (C) In the provinces:
 - I Imperial: 7 legati Augusti pro praetore;
 gradually rising to 10, to 13, to 14.
 - II Senatorial: 2 proconsuls (Africa, Asia)

The curator aquarum was very senior and so was the prefect of the city. The curators of the Tiber, of the public buildings and of the temples

took their appointments soon after the consulship. The latter, however, were men in favour and seem to have proceeded to major imperial provinces afterwards. The curators of the aqueducts and the prefects of the city seem to have held office indefinitely; perhaps even for life.

In theory it was the size of the legionary garrison that determined whether a province was praetorian or consular. Those which had more than one legion required a consular as commander and governor. In practice, of course, there were exceptions. Again, though all consular provinces could be held by men who had just taken their consulship there was in fact something of a hierarchy among them: Hispania citerior, Britain, Syria and later the III Dacia were generally reserved for men who had governed one of the other consular provinces first. The two Germanies, Upper Pannonia, the two Moesias, Cappadocia, Syria Palaestina were generally governed by men straight from their consulships. On the whole they were less exposed to war than were Britain and Syria even though their garrison strengths were often much the same. These two areas required independent action, whereas the others could often call up help from their neighbours. Most consular governors seem to have commanded a legion earlier in their careers. But very few governors can be found who had served either as tribune or legionary legate in an army which they later commanded as governor. Agricola again is an exception. A number of British governors came to Britain after a spell in charge of Germania Inferior. Governors of Syria had often held another eastern province.

Few men spent much more than three years in such commands and few senators held more than two consular provinces. What they looked forward to, instead, was the proconsulship of either Africa or Asia, which was held only for a year. Occasionally some served as general staff officers in campaigns when the emperor took the field. They were then known as comites Augusti. More commonly they received some priesthood and the patriciate. Finally there was the unusual honour of a second consulship as ordinarius. That came the way of very few.

We can see that there were several groups among the senators. There were those who had the emperor's favour and confidence. Then there were patricians who were content with republican magistracies and a consularship proconsulship. They did not hold posts in imperial provinces. The majority fell into an intermediate group. Many never reached the consulship and those who did might have had to take a number of

appointments first. Some of them, one way or another, acquired considerable military experience, even though a modern student might be inclined to classify them as amateurs. But the fact was that until the days of Constantine the provincial governors had to combine civil and military functions in the armed provinces. This we shall see featured in the career of Agricola, which is both typical and odd at its various points.

2.6. THE CAREER OF AGRICOLA.

This generalised senatorial career pattern will serve as a means of measuring that of Agricola and of assessing its normality.

1. No mention is made of an appointment to the vigintivirate. It may have been regarded as too junior a post to warrant a mention unless the candidate had the personal patronage of the emperor himself.
2. The appointment as military tribune is listed, together with a posting to the staff of the governor, Suetonius Paullinus, who was in charge of Britain. Probably these two posts occupied a period of time greater than one year, as had been suggested above.
3. There is no mention of any intermediate work before Agricola became a quaestor of the senatorial province of Asia in 63-4.
4. He was tribune of the people in 66 and 5. praetor in 68. Thereafter he was legatus legionis, in Britain, enrolled as a patrician, then governor in Aquitaine.
6. The consulship followed in 77 and he was immediately sent out as governor of Britain. This proved to be his final office. After it he retired into private life. Tacitus reports that some thought that he would go on to be governor of Syria, since it was a senior command reserved for men of eminence. (Agri. 40) They were to be not merely consulars but distinguished, outstanding men. After the battle of Mons Graupius Agricola had achieved that status, at least in the eyes of his son in law; but whether he had done so in the view of imperial administration may be considered more doubtful. We shall see better ourselves when we have examined the contents of the governorship of Agricola in detail: see below pp. 140-174. On the other hand Agricola - for whatever reason - declined an appointment as either governor of Africa or Asia.

Tacitus states that Agricola did not go forward to the appointment because of pressure from Domitian. (Agri. 42) But he does not make it clear whether he declined to join in the lottery or asked to be excused when he had drawn a province of senatorial rank. The implication seems to be that he asked to be excused before the lots were drawn. If this is so,

then the loss of salary from the governorship can hardly have been unexpected, though Tacitus explains it once more as imperial meanness of spirit. However, the refusal of a governorship was neither unusual nor even unprecedented. Men of senatorial rank did so. There seems to have been an established procedure for the securing of the excusatio. (9.). There was no need for Domitian to blush with embarrassment. He might have been irritated, however, by the refusal of Agricola to ask for the salarium which deprived him of the opportunity of a gracious response. Tacitus conjures up at this point a picture of an intimidated somewhat confused retired public servant, which is at variance with the whole tenor of the biography, in which Agricola is shown to be in control of events, moving graciously and easily from one situation to another. It seems inconceivable that he should have wished to give this impression. The spirit of the man here is shown to be quite overwhelmed. Perhaps there is another interpretation, which might even hint at a division of opinion between Agricola and Tacitus. Agricola had been an early adherent to the Flavian cause. He was a supporter in the West when most of Vespasian's strength lay in the East. Appointments followed quickly, partly as the payment of a debt of loyalty and partly out of the shortage of suitable men after the year of four emperors. There seems to have been a fairly close relationship between Agricola and Titus. During those years Domitian was an insignificant political figure, who came to power unexpectedly and, in many ways, ill-equipped. Agricola stood in a quite different relationship to him, than he had done with Domitian's father and brother. (10.). As he commanded four legions and a large force of auxiliaries, all of which were battle-hardened, and governed an island province, Agricola was not one of the many leading men who were summarily removed from power either by banishment or death. In fact he stayed on for a longer period than any other known governor but the decision that he should do so could be interpreted as much as an informal banishment as an act of confidence in his provincial rule. Agricola could be left to operate in Northern Scotland in campaigns that might be of benefit to the empire but which were not decisive for Domitian's own gloria. The brother in arms of Titus was better North of the Clyde than on the banks of the Tiber. If that is what the emperor thought about the governor, what did Agricola think about Domitian? He could not fail to notice that he received less than his predecessors, even though he might have done more. Eolanus and Frontinus both become

proconsuls of Asia and Cerialis received a second, perhaps even a third, consulship. Agricola was ordered ornamenta triumphalia; but even that could have been accorded by Titus. (Agri.40) Agricola could never hope to stand in relation to Domitian as he had to Titus. He must have known of the fate of many leading men and as his troops had been partly drafted away he must have perceived the re-direction of imperial policy. In short, Agricola could have disliked the new regime. Had he then decided that he would never again serve under Domitian? And, thus, could it be that he would not allow his name to go forward for the proconsulship of the province which two of his predecessors had received? (Nor for any other.) The interview with Domitian might indeed have seemed to be rich in hypocrisy with an emperor who was suspicious of a colleague of his hated elder brother and an ex-governor who would neither let his name go forward nor ask for the salarium of the office from which excusatio was sought. Agricola came out of the interview un beholden to Domitian. Tacitus referred to Agricola's interest in philosophy in early life. (Agri.4.). He emphasised the sequestered life-style adopted by his father in law. It was indeed that of a contemplative philosopher. Had Agricola, in fact, joined the Stoic opposition? They could not alter the course of events but they could strive to be uncontaminated by them. Tacitus could not. He continued in public life, working for a government whose acts he was to condemn in later life. The force of his invective against those dark years might be seen, in part, as a veiled impersonal criticism of those who decided to register what they felt about the quality of public life rather than energetically pursue virtus, somewhat naively, in a society that had become corrupted by the political system of the princeps.

The same willing retirement might, however, have come about from sheer anger because what he had acquired in Britain was let go so easily. Agricola had fought a long campaign and seen it completed successfully. Could he truly be regarded as a general? Or was he really a civilian who had some military experiences? It has been argued that within the senatorial order of governors there were those who might rightly be called virī militares. (11.). These men passed to the consulship after only two praetorian appointments: a legionary command and a praetorian governorship. This was the case with Agricola, who would thus qualify for this group. The argument asserts that such men were nurtured during their career for appropriate military appointments. At the same time they were brought forward somewhat earlier than others, to reach the consulship between the ages of 37 and 38, instead of the

more usual 42, so that they were available for senior provincial appointments and military high command at the peak of their physical and mental powers.

However, it has been disputed whether such a group ever existed. Agricola is odd not typical. Many men had three praetorian postings and a good many also received some civilian appointment, within the same grade. Progress depended not so much upon a military bias as upon patronage, social status and the number of posts available to be filled. The diversity displayed in the career of the consuls suggests that there was neither much specialisation nor a planned career pattern. A great deal depended upon what a man made of the posts he got. (Agri.5.) Militarily it must also have depended upon the frequency of wars! Thus the critics of the idea would not make a sharp distinction between civilian and military skills and tasks in provincial administration. Warfare and justice, administration and the leadership of troops went together managed effectively by lower order full-time professionals. The average consular governor was thus an all round amateur who achieved his status by a mixture of patronage, trust, and luck.

When the statistical samples on which this case is argued are so small it would be imprudent to classify the senators in the service of the emperor too sharply or, on the other hand, to account for all that happened as the result of chance, and favour. A better understanding of the role of the army in the provinces might help to clear up the position. 1. It was the principal institution into which Roman citizens were gathered. Though without any recognised political status its de facto position could not be ignored. The officers needed a certain political awareness in addition to the enforcement of military discipline. A bluff military manner was hardly sufficient. 2. The activities of the army in the provinces should not be defined in too combative a manner. The army was more than a fighting force. Soldiers provided a good deal of the provincial infra-structure. The legatus legionis had administrative responsibilities in his command area. Men were detached for staff duties in the office of the governor either at General Headquarters or on detached postings. Specialists of various kinds were seconded for duties which we would regard as civilian; like surveying, town planning, and revenue collection. Thus experience of various kinds of bureaucracy, administration of justice, together with military arts would not come amiss among those who were to administer provinces.

If the role of the army is defined in too narrow a fashion the viri militares might seem^a doubtful quantity and the magistracies and appointments on the senatorial cursus inadequate for producing the kind of full-time officials

hitherto envisaged. But if attention is given to the wider role then the various appointments have a certain relevance. Thus, within the career structure it does appear as though there were those with a military bias and those with a civilian one. Pliny the Younger and Tacitus himself seem to be illustrations of the latter trend. If the reader remains sceptical, it is worth asking one more question, independently of the statistics. Is it possible to conceive that appointments to governorships of imperial provinces were made at random? Hardly: the governance of the frontier areas warranted more concern than that. The emperor did recruit for his service and there is no evidence to suggest that he appointed by lot. Could men be sent out without the government considering either the needs of the province or of the army? There must surely have been some appreciation of the position by at least one person in the office of ab epistulis, to whom the regular despatches were sent. These reports must have built up a picture of some kind; that Britain required a governor who was militarily competent, that Judaea required a man who could handle the Jews. Mistakes were made, no doubt. It would have been very remarkable if they had not! There is little evidence, however, during this period to show that military novices were sent out to govern Britain. Scapula, Frontinus, Paullinus, even Bolanus and Agricola himself do not have a predominantly civilian aura about them. They seemed to know what to do in the field and in the camp. If results mean anything they were soldiers. Thus, while it is clear that there was not a sharp distinction between the civilian and military careers in the Roman world, it is also clear that there are emphases which point to a degree of specialisation, without the loss of all round ability. Thus the governorship of Aquitaine by Agricola is more than a civilian idyll in a military career. It is the acquisition of valuable administrative and judicial experience. The officer class of the army could not hope to be the effective defenders of the empire if it were composed merely of young men aged about 20 serving as staff officers, for about a year at a time, plus legates aged about 30 possessed of no special military experience who held the post for about three years, crowned by governors who had major military operations to conduct as well as administrative services to supervise for neither of which were they particularly prepared. Supplementation by a certain professionalism was needed. This is implied in the Agricola, where Tacitus makes clear the seriousness with which Agricola applied himself to his craft. (Agri.5.)

It met with an appropriate response from the governor. He invited him onto his staff. Agricola got training on the job. As legate he was given further training when Cerialis by degrees gave him larger forces to command. Thus he gradually moved from staff to executive duties and from the command on a single unit to the multiple forces that made up an army. The empire, one way or another, possessed a corps of competent soldiers who could not only fight but administer. They could both conquer and consolidate.

In many ways, therefore, the career of Agricola is not untypical of many legati augusti pro praetore. There are three points which might be regarded as abnormal: 1. He belonged to the small group of men who were brought on as magistrates with military skill, so that they could be used on the frontiers of the empire. 2. His governorship of Britain was about double the length of the normal tenure of authority. This may be explained by the conditions of the time. 3. He spent more time in Britain than might have been expected. Indeed he saw no military service elsewhere.

Perhaps he was regarded as an expert on the province. At any rate there were probably few who could rival his local knowledge. Reference has been made already to the shortage of suitable men on hand for the Flavian dynasty after the civil wars and the policy of Domitian soon after his accession has also been described. These two facts may be sufficient to explain the length of Agricola's postings in Britain. If this is so then the emperor might be thought to have acted shrewdly to make the best of what he had. On the other hand, the fact that Agricola did not go on to be Governor of Syria may be related as much to this specialisation as imperial pique. Effective as he was in Britain, Syria may have been thought to require a man whose background, experience and skills were rather different from those of Agricola. For example, it is not immediately clear that a capacity for dealing with the Brigantes is necessarily the best training for managing the Jews.

This is but secondary to our main purpose. For the historian of Roman Britain it is important to note that Agricola came to the province as governor well informed about it and trained in the normal pattern of the senatorial curae. However, effectiveness in the role depended not only upon previous training and experience but also upon the resources that were to hand, official policies and personal attributes. Success depended upon a mixture of personal and institutional factors. If Agricola is the ideal governor in the steps of his career, he is also the model for the characteristics necessary for the discharge of his duties. The Agricola describes them at each stage. To these we now turn.

2.7. THE ATTRIBUTES FOR SUCCESS

The successful governor must have military skill. (12). He ought to possess ingenium militare, since there would nearly always be troops to command and warfare to conduct. Britain was an outstanding example of the situation to be dealt with. Agricola was predominantly a fighting governor; more a General Officer Commanding in Chief than a Resident Commissioner. His predecessors had all been military men, as we shall see when the history of the province is examined. Those who aspired to serve the state, display virtus and establish their fama must take seriously the profession of arms. Thus, as a military tribune and as an officer on the general staff Tacitus draws attention to the necessary attitudes and practices to be adopted. The young officer must take his military life seriously. There should be no casualness nor life of ease. He has not joined the army to go on leave. On the contrary he must apply himself. He should know the province in which he served. An officer can hardly be effective if he is ignorant of native terrain and temperament. Nor can he lead troops properly unless he is known to them, and them to him. Only when both understand each other can there be the mutual confidence that breeds success. In the absence of a staff college the junior officer must have the perception to see what the most skilful seniors do and follow their example. The object of the art was to produce actions that were not precipitate, to endeavour to face difficulties rather than avoid them, and while acting with a certain caution to have a positive approach to military problems. (Agri.5.)

At this stage an officer should learn by watching. An executive command could not be expected. That would come later as a legionary legate. The intervening years would have been spent, as we have seen, in civil administration. The XX Legion was a good example of what needed to be done by the Commanding Officer. The civil wars had added a fresh task to the legate's role: now he must establish himself as the commander, at a time of divided loyalties. The political unreliability of this legion made the commandant's role even more difficult. Rank and status were not enough to ensure success. The troops had broken their previous commanders. How could a new man be tough towards them? Upon whom could he rely? A softer line was essential. Agricola demonstrated both flexibility and an effective approach. He assumed their loyalty. (Agri.7.) Hence the aspirant to office was taught the political virtues inherent in leadership of the best kind. On the other hand, there were problems with the higher command to be considered. The legate, as a powerful subordinate, might find himself in a

position where his military instincts clashed with general orders. Here the man who desired to rise to the top should remember that obedience was necessary. If he wished to be obeyed, he must respect the authority of his superiors. Vettius Bolanus, for a variety of reasons, pursued a more peaceful policy than his predecessors. The legionary commanders should follow the policy of the provincial GOC-in C. When the stance changed so should that of the legates. Petillius Cerialis developed Agricola's skills and enriched his experience. That was one reward of trustworthiness. First of all, Agricola was given work to do. It was a chance to prove himself and also the opportunity for the governor to make a personal assessment of the rising general. Satisfied with him, he next increased the forces under his command, gradually adding to them as results justified it.. Thus, Agricola acquired experience of commanding units larger than that of a legion. When he came to senior command himself, he had already got the appropriate experience, and as his subsequent campaign showed could direct the whole of his forces effectively. Thus, the ideal governor was not only well trained by his own powers of application, but was himself trained during his career by his seniors. The good governor attended to the training of his subordinates. By this means they are enabled to grow into the higher appointments. The control of subordinates is something of a problem. Tacitus was quite clear about the attitude to be adopted by the subordinates. To be successful in a lower position one should be self-effacing; modest about one's own successes and ascribe overall results to the senior officer commanding. Jealousy at all levels has to be faced. The envy of superiors was particularly dangerous for it could lead to the destruction of one's career. (Agri.8) What applied to the legate of a legion in relation to the governor could also apply to the governor in relation to the emperor. Even the Commander in Chief may feel threatened. If he does, then this will threaten a man's career.

Tacitus illustrates this by his description of Domitian's treatment of Agricola. In the end, modesty is not enough. The governor may not wreath his despatches in laurel, and the prose of his reports may be restrained but in the end the deeds which establish fame do speak to the world. Nobody could stop the emperor from comparing his own German campaigns with Agricola's in Britain and thinking that he came off second best. Domitian seems to have been easily threatened, psychologically. If he thought that Mons Graupius reflected badly on Germany then this would have implications in policy. If he thought that a successful governor was a threat to the emperor, then it was de facto, a threat and the man concerned would be dealt with on that basis.

We should bear in mind that military skill was an imperial quality. Many of the emperors had been successful generals. An ability to control troops and provinces was a pre-requisite for ruling the empire. Tacitus makes two points: first that the governor must face the vagaries of imperial pleasure and second, an emperor could, in fact, rely upon the loyalty of senior servants. Agricola illustrates both points. Whereas in the lower magistracies the movement from post to post was almost automatic, once the higher commands are reached acceptability to the supreme powers is paramount. Ability is not enough. Thus, there is more to be considered than capacity and previous career when a man is reviewed for the governorship of Syria. There were political questions in relation to security and loyalty, together with such things as personal skills for dealing with the problems which happened to be dominant at this time. (Different sorts of men might be needed from time to time.) Tacitus warns the aspiring entrant to face the possibility of disappointment at the highest level. (Agri. 39 & 40). A good reputation might, therefore, be no more a recommendation than a bad one. (Agri. 5.) On the other hand, the good man might also wish to consider the possibility of refusing to serve, if he thought that the political order was evil. This is merely hinted at, since Tacitus himself continued in active service during the bad times.

In some ways the campaign to recapture Anglesey displays what might be called the "field virtues" of a governor. First of all Agricola seized the initiative straightaway, thus, not only imposing his will upon the Ordovices but his leadership over his own men, and staff. Those who wanted to see how the governor could act found out soon enough. Generalship, is however, more than man management. Engineering qualities, for example, are also needed, if a position is to be secured and ground conquered to be consolidated. (Agri. 20.) The same also applies to the role as far as tasks of provisioning and of securing communications are concerned. The general must be a competent all rounder.

If then military skills could be acquired in actual practice by those who would apply themselves, there were personal attributes necessary by means of which the skills could be translated into effective results. Fortitudo was one such skill. After the massacre of the cavalry regiment stationed among the Ordovices Agricola decided to face the problem straightaway. He dealt with it immediately. There was no prevarication. (Agri. 18). He had learned such a response as a tribune. (Agri. 5.) He got together a field army from the units that were scattered in their winter quarters, thus showing that he

could both improvise and command a force of disparate units. This he did by leading "from the front". The possibility of this remark being a literary commonplace does not remove its importance within this particular context. Army leadership needs to be visible. From the Agricola to Roskill's Art of Leadership almost every handbook on leadership will rightly say the same.

Fortitudo must be linked with industria. The prompt response to the threat posed by the Ordovices showed that quality. Bolanus, hamstrung by the civil wars, suffered because he could not be active in the field: there was ill-discipline in the camp.

However, courage and energy must not be allowed to run riot. Ratio and constantia must be allied to them in order to produce good results. Again at the Menni Straits there was an illustration of this attribute. When boats and landing craft were found to be wanting, the ideal governor overcame the obstacle by his resourcefulness and determination. Agricola would not call off the assault. He sent in a body of specially trained auxiliary cavalry that he had prudently brought with him who swam the Straits fully armed with their horses and they established a bridgehead. These attributes were as necessary in defence as in attack. When the picket lines of the IX Legion were breached Agricola's counter-thrust was again immediate. First he sent up the fastest cavalry and infantry, as immediate relief, so that the position could be held and the situation contained, and then followed it up with a more general mobilisation. The good general attacks the attackers. Furthermore, the prosecution of a war is a demanding pursuit for which full concentration is required. There is no place for either casualness or self-indulgence, labor and disciplina are both necessary. Hence Agricola had no time for empty etiquette and the niceties of protocol when there was work to do. While some might spend their early days in ceremonial and the courting of compliments, the ideal governor sees what work there is to be done and does it. (Agri.18) Self-advertisement is not a desirable attribute. It does not produce fama, but only gossip. An official should be modest and apply himself to his tasks. When he does this he displays virtutes and fama follows. It is a by-product of effectiveness. The glory of Mons Graupius was the result of seven years hard work and it spoke for itself. (Agri.26)

The Agricola draws attention not only to the military side of the governor's role, together with the supporting attributes, but also deals with the work of civil administration and the personal qualities required for that aspect of the work. Attention to duties and incorruptibility are the two key

concepts here. Asia was rich; the administration malleable. It would have been easy to use the quaestorship to great personal advantage. The good public official does not fall into such temptation. A compact of mutual silence is irrelevant. (Agri.6.)

Aquitaine rather than Britain illustrates the necessary tasks within the civilian role. Iustitia here has pride of place. The ideal governor should be ready and able to give justice. Tacitus had to draw attention to this activity in Aquitaine rather than Britain because conditions in the latter province were unusual in this area. (see below p.145). The role of a good judge must embrace the capacity to combine justice with mercy. This, too, is a commonplace but nonetheless important in provincial administration. Tacitus points out that strictness in the dispensation of justice need not impair affection. It is corruption and the lack of self-control that destroy relationships. Once probity (auctoritas) is clear, authority can be allied to amiability. Severity of itself is not justice. Pomposity of style is an offence against both modestia and moderatio and leads a governor to confuse his public with his private persona. (Agri.9.)

There were, in Britain, certain questions of policy and style for which a governor must be prepared, even if he had not had previous experience of them. The new man must grow into his work and the first step must be to deal with the extant position rather than that which is assumed. Britain was ferox provincia. That is fundamental to any analysis of the province, in the eyes of Tacitus. Bolanus is used to hint at the possibility of a policy being implemented which is at variance with the properties of the situation with which it is supposed to deal. If the area of rule is war-like then what is the place of clementia? It must be determined more by policy than by temperament. Thus the revolt of the Ordovices had to be suppressed and the task ought to be done in such a way that they never raised their head again. The tribe would then serve as a warning to others. Agricola virtually exterminated them. Terror was used as a deliberate act of policy. He is shown in public action practising that which his whole biography suggests is foreign to him as a private person. However, terror is not sufficient of itself. Here lies the difference between Agricola and Suetonius Paulinus. The latter found that after he had crushed the rebellion of Boudicca he could not pacify the province. He seemed to have no policy beyond punishments. As a result the Britons did not surrender. They may have been broken in a battle but surrender was as terrible in its consequences as a continued, even if hopeless, guerilla warfare. (Annals 14.38.

& Agri. 19). After the war there must be a second phase. Appropriate pacification must be brought about. Governors who cannot make the transition will often find themselves replaced. Fine officer as he was Paulinus had to go. Agricola attacked the enemy by means of sudden raids and when he had satisfied himself that enough force had been used he offered conditions which made peace attractive. His was a warfare that was effective both militarily and psychologically.

In addition to these tactics a certain policy emphasis was needed. Agricola saw that continued peace depended upon the removal of grievances. It was these that made people rebellious. There must be an equitable administration whether in demands for taxes or in public administration as a whole. (Agri. 19) A "romanization" programme could be a policy of pacification. It should be promoted by the good governor. There would be an eager response. The tools of civilisation became the instruments of subjection. The wrath of response from the natives made them their own wardens. Thereafter they were free to turn their energies to fresh activities. Culture increased the security of the state. (Agri. 21.)

Much depended upon the resources available to a governor. Some of these were determined by his own choice; others were allocated to him. The selection of his staff was a matter of some importance. Substantially this lay within the discretion of the governor. What, then, should be the basis for appointments?

The slaves and freedmen who acted as stenographers and copyists, for example, may well have been part of the permanent bureaucracy and thus have been passed on from one governor to another. If they were part of the official household, there must have been some who were drawn from the governor's private household who came across with him. The good governor should beware. Whether public or private such people were unsuitable for the transaction of public business. They should never be executive agents. (Agri. 19). No doubt they had a place behind the scene - Roman life would have been impossible without them - but that was where they should remain.

Those who performed higher grade work either in the headquarters or on detached duties might well be soldiers and non-commissioned officers who were seconded from their units. These officials needed more careful selection, if only because the element of discretion in their work was greater, with its consequences for the security of the province, if they used their initiative inappropriately. They might be acting as couriers or local officers say in charge of a police post. The way in which grain levies had

been managed under previous administrations showed the possible dangers. An insensitive, heavy-handed official was like flint in a tinder box. There would always be the threat of violence or of a general uprising. The governor should beware of indulging his personal preferences, of obliging the many people who solicited the favour of an appointment from him. There should be only one rule: to choose the best. Tacitus is silent about the selection of the governor's immediate entourage. This was a matter of personal invitation and no doubt there was a good deal of canvassing, so that somebody's career could be advanced. Such appointees could not be discarded without offence to a patron. Here the rule must be: to go for the men of integrity rather than to manage ruthlessly by dismissing the inadequate.

(Agri.19) Small errors were of little moment; but major mistakes were dangerous. They could not only cause trouble but affect the standing of the governor. There is a sense in which a leader cannot be better than his subordinates. The good governor need not involve himself in everything that is going on but he should know what is happening. If he possessed the information he can form a judgment about whether to act himself.

The shrewd young man situated on the lower rungs of the cursus might also pick up valuable insights from the Agricola about dealing with the parallel administrations. First of all he should realise that civilians are not always complimentary about the viri militares. They tend to think that administration is easier for soldiers to handle because army law and discipline simplify actions! The military mind may therefore lack the subtlety which civilians prize. Hence the soldier may be thought to lack the sensitivity that delicate situations require. The soldier should be aware of this condescension. If the civilian can be won over it is a great advantage. Thus the soldier must show his ability. Not least, he must cultivate his own personal attributes. Nowhere is this more important than in the dispensation of justice. (Agri.9.) Tacitus is quite explicit about this. The other point he makes here is couched more obliquely.

He writes that the governor needs to get on with the imperial agents. Here we meet the first of the parallel administrations. The procurators and their staff were in the province but not subject to the governor's control. In any dispute appeal to Rome was necessary. The emperor had more than one pair of eyes in a province. The effect of such a powerful parallel administration should not be under-estimated. Organisationally such systems can easily be in each other's way. This creates additional work locally but is often comforting to the central authorities who can play off one against the other,

if it suits their purpose. Divide and rule. The procurators were in charge of finance; and that involved the collection of taxes and all other treasury business. The Social status of these officials was different from the lorati augusti pro praetore. They were either freedmen from the imperial household or equites; with the latter in the majority. They managed the imperial estates directly and came more immediately into contact with governor as paymaster to the army. They also dealt with indirect taxes. That the relationship could and did go wrong is seen before and after Boudicca's rebellion. The immediate cause of the uprising seemed to be the way in which procuratorial staff called in loans among the Iceni and acquired royal property. Suetonius Paulinus was not foolish in moving the army to North Wales for the final conquest of that country. There were sufficient troops available to the procurators for their ordinary duties. Their ineptness sparked off the conflagration for which Paulinus had to come hastening back. He was after all accountable for security but could not determine the means by which security could be attained! The next procurator Classicianus disagreed profoundly with the governor's policy after the final victory and carried his opinion successfully to Rome. The governor was replaced. The norm for the good governor is clearly stated at the end of Agricola's governorship of Aquitaine: do not become involved in wrangling with imperial agents. (Agri.9.) Though expressed as a negative, Tacitus would have the reader take the point positively: there should be no rivalry between public servants. The insight is most important but is expressed tactfully. The governor probably did not clash with the other parallel administration: that of the iuridicus. Where the governor was obliged to spend much of his time in the field, the administration of justice became difficult. It was either done badly or erratically. Military operations could suffer or even, perhaps, the governor became over-worked. If any of these things happened the state suffered. In a province like Britain a separate legal department was established through which ordinary justice could be given and the tribal court system kept under review. This took some of the burden of administration away from the governor and for the most part they might be glad of it; and furthermore the work of the iuridicus might well not be the irritant that the procurator was.

The other area for consideration lies in the area of indirect rule. During the first century, when there were leaders of proved loyalty to Rome, the government was prepared to leave them in office. Herod of Judaea is perhaps the best known example of this device. Use was also made of it in Britain for the territory of the Regnenses and Iceni. The governor would retain

overall responsibility for security, since the carrying of arms and the raising of private armies was forbidden; but within those general limits the client king was left to manage his own internal affairs. The reliability of Cogidubnus in Britain was well-known and Tacitus pays a particular tribute to him. (Agri. 14) These kings had no right to bequeath their lands to their next of kin. Occasionally they passed to their sons, as in Judaea, but as we find there the monarch was replaced if there was any hint of trouble. By degrees they were phased out anyhow. The Iceni were absorbed after the death of the king Prasutagus, whose wife was Boudicca. Cogidubnus does not appear to have passed on his lands to any heir that he may have had. The device of a client-kingdom was undoubtedly useful during the early stages of annexation since it was economical in the use of Roman personnel. But as the Iceni and the Jews showed, it did not always make for permanent security. The governor who had such enclaves within his province had to get along with such monarchs as best he could. They might not cause problems but in any dispute they might appeal to Rome.

The provincial council was not exactly a parallel administration since it did not have executive functions; but a governor was, nonetheless, well advised to keep an eye on it. While it had mainly a ceremonial function expressing the allegiance of the province to the emperor, it could and did pass a vote of thanks to a retiring governor, and it could also pass a vote of censure. Either act was of some significance for a legate who would therefore wish to keep up a good relationship with it, if he had any political sense at all. Furthermore, the council could ask a prominent Roman to act as the provincial patron in Rome. He was expected to keep under review the interests of the province and give legal advice and counsel as necessary. This "lobby" needed to be watched by a governor as well. In toto a governor might feel that though he were far from Rome the emperor did not lack for information about the way in which the life of the province progressed. His own despatches were only one element in the information service available to the central government, and a legate could be forgiven if, from time to time, he felt somewhat insecure, especially if the emperor were an unstable character or easily influenced by sectional interests.

Overall the governor was not a free agent. Tacitus is silent about the most significant item that restricted the discretionary powers of the governor: the mandata. These were his policy instructions with which he left for his province. They were drawn up by the emperor and his advisers. From them he could not depart and about them and other affairs he must report to ab epistulis. This was a mixture of the Department of State and the

Ministry of Defence. The governor could never forget whom he served and he must have always had in mind that he had no fixed tenure of office. He was appointed at the imperial pleasure.

On the whole, an average posting lasted between three or four years. Agricola was exceptional. His tenure of office was about double the normal length of time. There may be reasons for that connected with the policy of the government either in relation to Britain as a whole or old colleagues of Titus in particular. The student of Roman provincial administration needs to keep in mind that the personal preferences of those in charge count as much as other factors when officials are being selected and managed at this level. We can now perceive that the career of Agricola is both typical of the cursus and odd within it. 1. Evidence from epigraphy and other sources enables us to fill in the probable junior appointments to which Tacitus makes no reference. 2. Agricola proceeds through the normal sequence of middle rank and senior appointments. 3. His arrival at the consulate is, perhaps, rather early. Some designation of him for high command may be the reason. This would be assumed more strongly by those who accept the argument about the virii militares. Those who believe that Vespasian was short of suitable men for major appointments will think that it was more a matter of time and chance. 4. Agricola spends more time in Britain than might be thought normal, though the same may be said of Cerialis, to some extent. Once again either of the previous arguments can be applied. Britain was a major theatre of war and during times of civil stress could not be allowed to continue in an unstable position. 5. This, too, may account for the abnormal length of Agricola's governorship of the province. 6. The overall military position may also explain why he held only two praetorian appointments. There were pressing problems of security to be dealt with and those who displayed any capacity for generalship were needed immediately for them, rather than being held back by acquiring further administrative experience. 7. There was no reason why he should have gone on to be governor of Syria, though Tacitus, no doubt, would have liked that. There were doubtless a number of men who could have filled the role, but only one could take it. The unsuccessful officials might have stood a chance next time round, but by that time it was also possible that they might be thought too old. The consulship was the crown for a senator: a consular provincial governorship was the summit for some, and for many more, perhaps, appointments of the praetorian! There never was room at the top for everyone.

It is just conceivable that Agricola was glad enough to take the hint about remaining in retirement. He may have wished things to be that way. Perhaps he had resolved not to work further for the last of the Flavians, whom he had served so well, because now he found that the days were evil. It is worth remembering that his father met an untimely death as a result of imperial ill-will and his mother had died during the civil war of 69, at the hands of undisciplined troops. Such a memory cannot have been without its effect, even if it cannot find a place in the biography, written by his son in law, of an ideal public servant. He may have retired so much from public view that gossips, indeed, did wonder how he ever came to have a reputation at all. On the other hand, perhaps his achievements were more limited than Tacitus suggests. We shall be able to form a judgment about that when we have studied the governorship of Agricola in detail. (see below p.140).

In this section we have been studying the career of Agricola and the senatorial cursus honorum as well as evaluating the possible nature of the Agricola in order to discover whether they throw light upon the history of Roman Britain. Whereas in the first section we saw how the historical work of Tacitus was metropolitan centred, now in the second we see how the Agricola is what might be called an institutionalised biography. The history of Britannia contained in his writings is seen, therefore, to lie below a number of levels to which we have now drawn attention. If there is a certain loss of immediacy, there are compensations because a framework of policy, action and perception has been established which may yet assist rather than hinder us in using Tacitus to help us unfold better the nature of the Roman presence in these islands.

- (1) Furneaux and Anderson p. xxi ff, and Ogilvie and Richmond p.11 ff.
- (2) The Agesilaos of Xenophon and Evagoras of Isocrates came to be regarded as models for this branch of literature. From them rhetoricians formulated the rules of composition.
- (3) The echoes of Sallust in the text of Tacitus are pointed out in both Furneaux and Anderson and Ogilvie and Richmond.
- (4) Furneaux and Anderson op. cit. p. xxiii.
- (5) Richmond JRS xxxiv p. 34 ff.
- (6) Streng. M. Agricola Das Vorbild römischer Statthalterschaft nach dem Urteil des Tacitus. Bonn. 1970. p.107. The author argues the case for the Agricolae to be considered as the character study of an ideal governor most persuasively. She likens the work to the Letter to Quintus by Cicero and the Letters of the Younger Pliny which she draws on copiously. She also compares Agricola with other distinguished generals like Corbulo and Suetonius Paullinus. From the relevant Latin literature she focuses on what appear to be significant words which described both the role and the attributes necessary for it.
- (7) Bloch R. L'epigraphie Latine. Paris. 1952. and ed. Temporini H. Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt. New York. 1974. II. 1. Eck. W. Beförderungskriterien innerhalb der senatorischen Laufbahn. pp. 158-228.
- (8) Earl D. The moral and political tradition of Rome. London. 1967.
- (9) Traub H.W. Agricola's refusal of a governorship. Classical Philology XLIV. (University of Chicago.) 1954. p.255. seq.
- (10) Birley A.R. Agricola, the Flavian Dynasty and Tacitus in The Ancient Historian and his Materials. Farnborough. 1975.
- (11) Proceedings of the British Academy. 1954. Birley E.B. Senators in the Imperial Service. Journal of Roman Studies. LXV. 1975. p.11. Campbell B. Who were the viri militares?
- (12) Streng M. Das Vorbild römischer Statthalterschaft nach dem Urteil des Tacitus. Bonn. 1970.

SECTION 3.

THE PROVINCE AS DESCRIBED BY
TACITUS.

- 3. 1. Geography
 - 3. 2. Anthropology and ethnography
 - 3. 3. Warfare and Climate
 - 3. 4. The attitude of the people
 - 3. 5. The value of the material
- Footnotes

THE PROVINCE AS DESCRIBED BY TACITUS3. 1. GEOGRAPHY

Tacitus does not describe either the geography or the ethnography of Britain until Agricola becomes the governor. For our purposes, however, it is convenient to commence with this part of the text, because it enables us to set the background for the earlier history of the province.

In c.10 of the Agricola Tacitus asserts that the geography and description of the peoples of Britain have been undertaken by numerous earlier writers. These he does not name but we may take him to be referring to Caesar, Strabo, Pomponius Mela and the elder Pliny, in addition to Livy and Fabius Rusticus, whom he does mention when the shape of the island is discussed. He claims to improve upon them merely because, with the total conquest of Britain under Agricola, what they guessed at can now be confirmed as fact. Perhaps we may regard these remarks as cast in a conventional literary form, since in fundamentals they were all agreed.

Of all the islands known to the Romans, Britain is the largest, Tacitus correctly asserts. He then goes on to give its conventional location: eastward it looks towards Germany; westward to Spain; southward to Gaul and northward to no land mass at all, but only to open sea. The shape of the island is that of an elongated shoulder-blade or double headed axe - or so previous writers had described it. This is only partly true, however, since it takes no account of Caledonia. Once that is added, the description will not serve because this large, formless landmass, running into the shape of a wedge, distorts the image fundamentally. The fact that Britain was an island was only established after Agricola ordered the fleet to sail along the coast. During that voyage the Orcades were found and annexed. Thule was seen but not invested. The sailors found sailing in those waters heavy work for the sea seemed sluggish; heavy to the oar and torpid even in the wind. The region was truly one where the sea held sway. Not only do the tides ebb and flow but the sea waters wend their way deep inland among the hills.

We must now examine the information given by Tacitus in detail. Until the time of Julius Caesar Britain had lain beyond the mental horizon of the Roman Republic, though not that of Greek travellers. To the former it was at the world's edge. The inhabitants, in the words of Catullus, were "the remotest Britons". Even the existence of the island might be doubted by the ignorant and superstitious. Both the invasions of Caesar and Claudius were the occasion of restlessness among the troops of the expeditionary force, who were reluctant to commit themselves to the enterprise. These difficulties might well have stemmed from ignorance

of this kind, with the fears that it produced. However, it also seems clear that there were more immediate obstacles. In Caesar's first expedition the hesitation also arose from an appreciation of the dangers of beach head landings on unsuitable shores. (1) The resistance to the Claudian invasion showed itself at the base camp rather than at the point of action. This was clearly a problem of military morale, since it was restored by the troops themselves when they appreciated the humour of a situation in which they as citizens were addressed by a freedman. Nonetheless, Dio Cassius, to whom we owe the information goes on to state that the men were indignant at the "thought of carrying on a campaign outside the limits of the known world". (2) We must remember, however, that Tacitus showed in the Annals how, during the German wars, the army had operated in unknown places without the same kind of difficulties. Here the elements had been both unkind and unfavourable. Perhaps the memory of them affected the troops. More to the point may have been the sea crossing. Officers who had read Caesar's Gallie War might well have recollected how quickly storms could blow up and endanger the expedition. It is one thing to assume that ordinary people were ignorant of Britain and another to believe that educated Romans were. Caesar had put Britain on the mental map of the metropolitan citizen. Tacitus is catering for this more sophisticated public in the Agriicola. The works of Livy and Fabius Rusticus dealing with Britain are now lost. Caesar is referred to in c.13. The others were also fairly well-known amongst the reading public. The oldest source was probably Pytheas, a Greek from Massilia, who was alive c.310 BC. He may be the source of much of the information used by later writers. Perhaps only he and Caesar had ever visited the island.

That Britain was an island had never been doubted by any of Tacitus's forerunners. They all assert its insularity. There may be some Tacitean hyperbole here for the sake of emphasizing the voyage authorised by Agricola. The circumnavigation verified the received opinion. The student from Massilia confirmed the statements of ^{Pytheas an} earlier traveller from that same colony. Tacitus was correct in declaring that Britain was the largest island known to Rome. Only Sicily could compare with it and both Strabo and Mela had made the comparison.

There are some inaccuracies in the description of the location of Britain. If it is accepted that Germania was the Roman name for the landmass between the mouths of the Rhine and the ice-fields of Scandinavia then it is true that Britain in the East faces Germany. Part of the South coast faces Gaul and there is open sea to the North and North-west.

Ireland is not mentioned here. It occurs later (c.24) as a possible object of conquest lying between Britain and Spain because the West coast of Britain is said to face Spain. (c.11) Tacitus was not alone in his error. Caesar took the same view (3). The origin of the mistake is not clear. It may lie, partly, in the fact that there had been some commercial contacts between Spain and South West Britain, as well as Ireland. The main cause must lie, however, in faulty map making techniques which were themselves associated with inadequate surveying. The Gallic coast, for example, was thought to lie parallel to the South coast of Britain. The Pyrenees were imagined to run from North to South, with western Britain opposite to them. The existence of the Bay of Biscay does not seem to have been recognised. Failure to observe this dramatic and significant geographical feature is odd. So too is the erroneous view that the British and Gallic coasts run parallel to each other. The two are visible from each other in the South East but their divergence is obvious to anyone who has ever walked along them with our perception of reality. But that is what the Romans did not have. It is one thing to know the world is a sphere and another to apply it to distance and perspective. The Romans saw things differently. What we now know to be the more accurate ideas of Eratosthenes (c.250 BC) based upon the reports of Pytheas were but one view among the many held without verification by those who had never seen for themselves. They lacked the means of establishing the truth they asserted. That is why Tacitus underlines the importance of Agricola's feat; even though he himself still does not correct the details of Britain's geography, for his information was second-hand, like nearly everyone else's. Truth could be disbelieved as easily as falsehood. Most Roman authors were in this position. Tacitus was no exception.

The configuration of Britain presented problems which were not dissimilar. To them Tacitus addressed himself with a view to correcting the errors of his predecessors. Hitherto it had been maintained that the main island resembled an elongated shoulder-blade or double-headed axe. A scutula had been defined as heteromeros quadrangulum, nec latera habet paria, nec angulos rectos, simile scutellae: a trapezium. (4) Caesar, however, had asserted that the island was triangular. There was some force in this image since knowledge of the island gradually reduced as vision extended northwards. Finally it disappeared completely into ignorance or fable. The Romans knew something of southern Britain from political and economic relationships; but of the north they were largely ignorant. Tacitus may have preferred the triangular description to the shoulder-

blade imagery of Livy and Fabius Rusticus on the grounds that it was, in fact, more accurate, but only so far as the borders of Caledonia. When that region was included then no suitable imagery could be found, except that the final promontory was not unlike a wedge. Analogies and images are useful to a writer especially when the reader is bound to be generally ignorant of the subject under discussion. Posidonius had described Spain, for example, as being shaped like an out-stretched ox-hide. The limitations of the imagery were clearly perceived by the writers themselves. The ox-hide has to be out-stretched and the shoulder-blade elongated. The qualifications offered make the approximations of the imagery clear. Their value does not lie in their accuracy so much as in establishing a concept or picture in the mind of the reader, which serves to give a sense of place for the subsequent information. The similes and metaphors can sometimes be a snare and thus of doubtful value. The informed reader asks himself whether an elongated shoulder-blade is an approximation to a rhombus or trapezium? If Britain is like a double headed axe, which part of the axe represents the narrow part of Britain? To such questions the modern reader is not always able to give an answer, nor is it to be supposed, necessarily, that the writer who used the imagery, in the first place, envisaged a literal application of the literary device which he employed.

The reference of Tacitus to a vast irregular tract of land can be taken as descriptive of Caledonia, where among tribes, hitherto unknown, dwelling in terra incognita, the hero of the Agricola was to venture and win a notable victory. Rome had, indeed, planted her standards at one of the world's imagined corners. This is a subtle tribute to the magnitude of Agricola's achievement, placed earlier in the book. The information which Tacitus gives about the northland and the influence of the sea could rest upon the direct statement of Agricola himself to his son-in-law. More likely, perhaps, as a source were the accounts of the officers of the fleet which had carried out the expedition. But none of them had much time for surveying. An impression was surely all that they could gain and communicate. Nevertheless, that is enough for the purposes of Tacitus. No one in fact could be accurate. The technology of the times did not permit it. Finally we must remember that, on principle it often seems, Tacitus eschews details which he regards as mundane or prosaic - but which we should find illuminating for his times. We may accept, therefore, that Roman metropolitan society accepted that the voyage of the fleet round Britain established the veracity of the travellers' tales that had hitherto held the field. The sense of awe, isolation and/or risk that Britain had engendered was being gradually

broken down. Thereafter there is no talk of mystery.

There were, however, aspects of the unknown which might be gazed upon from afar. The Orkneys, the centre of a vigorous human settlement, were formally invested. Had they been annexed during the Claudian invasion, as is sometimes asserted, it would, indeed, have been an outpost of empire. (5) Certainly it was one that could not have been followed up; whatever token surrender might have been offered by a chieftain visiting in the south. Thule was neither occupied nor had it surrendered. It was, in fact, an imprecise location. By it Pytheas may have meant either Iceland or Norway, perhaps the Faroes and even Rockall might be suggested. On the whole we might consider it unlikely that a Roman fleet, ordered to sail round the coast of Britain, would have ventured out into the open sea, at the end of a long campaigning season, and sailed so far into the unknown. Ingenuity of solution must give place to moderation. Instead of these distant places we might ourselves hazard one or other of the Shetland Isles or a more distant island off the West coast of Scotland that was seen and not occupied. The verb dispicere used by Tacitus here is generally employed when writing of anything that cannot be distinguished without difficulty. Whatever was seen was not perceived very distinctly.

Seamanship was difficult in those waters, Tacitus continues. Rowing was incredibly heavy work. The wind was also lacking. The description given by Tacitus of the latter accords more with the convention of the time than the climatic realities that we know. It was commonly thought that there was little or no wind on the edge of the world. Of course the fleet may have enjoyed the calm days of an Indian summer during their voyage. They could have got the wrong impression! The difficulties of rowing can be more easily explained. The description given by Tacitus would fit the progress of ships near the Orkneys. Here vessels move out of the short waves of the North Sea into the long rolling waves of the North Atlantic Drift Current, with its accompanying head winds. The current alone is capable of carrying a ship backwards, even when it is under sail and moving with the tide against a light wind. It has also been suggested by earlier scholars that the conditions were the result of profuse seaweed, which (it is said) is still found along the Norwegian coast; but that suggests a voyage further than seems to have been likely in the circumstances. (6) This description should be set alongside a not dissimilar account in Germania: c.45. Altogether the conditions believed to exist in distant places and those actually experienced to the north of Scotland approximated sufficiently to give verisimilitude to mythology. Tacitus was better informed about the sea lochs; and right to draw

attention to the influence of tidal waters around the coast, particularly in the West. It has always been a potent force in the history of these islands. The character of the sea lochs is striking to an observer, especially along the heavily indented coast-line, where both the tides and the currents call for highly skilled navigation. This section of the Agricola, at least, possesses the 'feel' of a first-hand witness. In so short a work the reader may be surprised that so much maritime information is given. However, there are literary reasons for this. First, the details show that Agricola both marched and sailed to the very edge of the island, thereby placing the frontiers of Rome at the ocean's edge. Thus his victory was not only complete but comprehensive. Second, the description hints at the effective use which Agricola made of the fleet: a somewhat unusual feature in Roman military history. Third, it can be suggested that the distinguished product of Massilia's schools and colleges established the veracity of the stories told by the city's most intrepid explorer. Agricola had, at any rate, shown Pytheas to be right. That could at least have given Agricola pleasure!

3. 2. THE ANTHROPOLOGY AND ETHNOLOGY OF BRITAIN

The salient geographical facts about Britain having been given, with a few brief, confident strokes, Tacitus turns to the inhabitants themselves. The reader is asked to remember (c.11) that we are dealing with a province which is inhabited by barbarians, who have no certain history. Hence no one can be sure whether the population is indigenous or migrant. There seem to be regional types. This may be an argument in favour of a population derived from places overseas. Thus the Caledonians, with their large frames and hair varying from red to golden yellow, seem to have some affinity with the Germans. The Silures, by contrast, have dark complexions and curly hair, with which Tacitus connects the Iberian peoples. The people of the south have a clear affinity with the Gauls. This is supported with better evidence: they have common characteristics, and their language is virtually the same. Tacitus argues that this must indicate a migration across the Channel. True the Britons seem to possess more spirit than the Gauls, but as those who have been under Roman rule longest show, by degrees they too will become softened by conquest.

If the literary models for this kind of writing had been closely adhered to, the reader might well have expected something about the physical features of Britain. (7) These are, however, passed over; but altogether the main items are covered in chapters 11 and 12. Passing reference is made, during the campaigns of Agricola, to the crossing of the rivers. Mountains were less of an obstacle. When natural difficulties

occur they are used to demonstrate the capacity of the governor to overcome them. The crossing of the Menai Straits is the principal case in point.

All of these factors, no doubt, made the prosecution of the war more difficult but they are treated incidentally, along with other information, which critics, in general, have considered vague. Furneaux and Anderson complain of the "scantiness and vagueness" of both the geographical and topographical details. Ogilvie and Richmond deplore the fact that Tacitus employs "geographical" terms only when the narrative demands them, and so names no more than five tribes, three rivers, two islands, one hill and one harbour." (8)

There is a certain oddity about this kind of criticism. Scholars try to decide whether the Agriicola should be regarded as a biography or some other literary form. Having concluded that it is more akin to biography, than, perhaps, anything else, they then criticise Tacitus for not including material, which they have previously demonstrated does not belong to biography, as such. The geographical and anthropological material is taken as a case in point. However, when these sections are studied they are then dismissed as being quite inadequate. The writer thus loses on both counts. Yet no one seems to consider whether just enough material of this kind is included so that sufficient background information is provided to enable the reader to understand the context in which the main character acts. Second, Tacitus was a literary rather than a scientific historian. Furneaux and Anderson recognise this when they write that he used "easily apprehended generalities". So one cannot be surprised that in a work of this kind geographical terms are only used when the narrative requires them. Peculiarity would have existed in the reverse position! Finally, we should do well to consider how much detailed knowledge the first readers of the Agriicola could have. Very little, must be the answer to that question. "He wrote for men who knew nothing of Britain and had no proper maps to consult, if confronted with strange place names". (9).

Thus, if it is assumed that Tacitus could assume very little about Britain in the mind of his readers, we must consider what there was within the province to which he could make reference as a means of enabling them to give them meaning? What were the definite, precise locations, to which modern scholars are so attached, that he could use? There was little even in the south of the province. Perhaps, London, on the banks of the Thames, could be referred to. Colchester might well have been well-known. Their geographical location in relation to each other might have been vaguely known. However, we must remind ourselves that Agriicola was to

spend little time in the South. The North was to occupy him. What was there in the North to which the Roman reader could relate? Were there special physical features, important settlements, tribes or activities of any kind which the readers would recognise? There were neither tribes nor towns with whom Roman merchants had traded directly. Not every river crossing in the highland zone could be mentioned. That would, indeed, be boring. They are subsumed in a general comment about the exploration of estuaries. Where it matters, they are identified in both the Annals and the Agricola: the Menai Straits, the rivers Severn, Trent, Forth and Clyde and finally the Tay. The former rivers as frontier lines, the latter as the borderland of Caledonia itself. Clearly after the last subjugation of the Ordovices Agricola and his army, having formally annexed Brigantia, marched out into the great unknown. That added to the brilliance of his fama.

Tacitus stood in relation to North Britain as early writers did to the Amazonian jungle, with one significant disadvantage: he could give no reference points, based on longitude and latitude. There were no generally known locations to which reference could be made and Tacitus should not be blamed for failing to do what it did not lie within the power of anyone to do. Tacitus took the right course. He built up a generalised picture, giving it detail by dealing with particular factors, when they had significance for the invading force and gave identity to opponents.

Archaeology has not enabled us to confirm the description of the various physical types which Tacitus identified in Britain. Here he is unchallenged. Furneaux and Anderson declare, "His ethnological statements are naturally defective". (10) Is the ancient historian predestined to be wrong? We must turn to the criticism in detail.

Tacitus clearly recognises the variety of human types to be found in the islands. He is not defective about that! We may be somewhat sceptical about some of the explanations offered about their origins. Modern archaeology has shown that wave upon wave of migrants swept across, at least part, of these islands.

Whereas modern scholars have preferred to start in the South and work north, Tacitus starts with the North and moves South. There does not appear to be any evidence to contradict Tacitus when he writes that the Caledonians did have large limbs and reddish hair. However, we should bear in mind that if the description comes from the governor himself, he could only have been speaking of the peoples of the lowlands and north east Scotland. The broch builders of the Western Isles were

beyond his compass. Even though the fleet sailed among them there is no suggestion that they had made any human contact. Archaeology suggests however that these peoples might well have some affinity with the peoples of south west Britain. (11) Furthermore there does not appear to be any evidence to suggest that there were ever migrations from Germany to Caledonia.

In fact a movement of peoples may be traced in a quite different direction. The fundamental migration seems to have been from the south and east to the North. It has been considered possible that the people who constructed the brochs (built as massive dry stone towers) between Skye and Shetland were escaping from parts of South West Britain which in their turn were being occupied by the invading Belgae, in the period immediately before the Roman conquest. These peoples were the last of a number who had crossed the channel at various points and then either fought or infiltrated their way inland. No doubt in some places the former inhabitants fled and in others they were massacred but we must also make allowance for the possibility that the natives were merely submerged by the dominant minority. At the same time some groups may well have been able to continue living as they did before, untouched by these migrations, on account of their physical isolation, so that ancient and modern cultures could continue to subsist side by side in one region during the same period of time. Some Mesolithic settlements of the so-called Peterborough People continued during Neo-lithic times in, at least, some of the inaccessible, heavily forested and water logged parts of the English midlands. However, some such people also appear to have moved northwards into Northumbria and southern Scotland, as well as westwards into Wales. From these migrants the settlements at Skara Brae and Rinyo in the Orkneys appear to have originated. To the very end of its existence the former knew nothing of either the working of metals or the cultivation of grain. Their isolation encapsulated them in their own culture and kept them from the impact of fresh peoples bearing a different way of life.

This latter movement was but one of a whole series. From about 750 BC the Celts began to arrive in Britain. Gradually they established themselves over the lowlands from Cornwall to Lincolnshire, bringing with them their plough, which gave them greater potential as agriculturalists. The 'Urn Folk' (so-called from the large urns in which they buried their dead) whom the Celts displaced moved on, in a mainly northerly direction. Thus their pastoral way of life survived, even though Celtic agriculture became established in their old homelands. Thereafter a series of Celtic migrations followed, traces of which can be discerned over much of lowland Britain; but this is beyond the scope of our present study.

However, there are certain developments with which we must be concerned. About 75 BC there was some population movement across the channel, where the people possessed more noticeable Germanic elements in their culture. They were known as the Belgae and it was with them that the Roman government was predominantly concerned in its relations with Britain. Tacitus does not identify them as Belgae. No doubt to him they were all Gauls. He was right, however, to draw attention to the features which were common to the settlements on either side of the water. Common climate was not without its effect; but some kind of common ancestry must also be surmised as he rightly supposed.

The complexities of the relation between Rome and these migrants may be deferred until the conquest of the island is studied in more detail. Meanwhile we turn to the last of the racial groups mentioned by Tacitus; the Silures. If the Gauls north and south of the English Channel seemed inter-connected through language, then the peoples of the west seemed to have some relationship with those of the Iberian peninsula, if the common physical characteristics of curly hair and swarthy skins had any meaning. There certainly seems to have been some connection by way of trade between Spain and St. Michael's Mount in Cornwall as well as between Spain and Wales during Iron Age Periods B and C. (12) Whether there was any significant migration to Britain, however, is more doubtful. Given the state of shipping at the time, the voyage would have been regarded as hazardous. Had a whole tribe sailed, few, perhaps, would have survived the journey to conquer native peoples. Until there is more definite evidence we may suspend judgement upon the statement of Tacitus, though we may accept the grounds on which he made it. Meanwhile it may be more prudent to accept the view that in the Silures we see among the Celts living in south Wales a "strong infusion of native British blood resulting from fusion with the descendants of older stock". The term Iberian is thus used to describe the non-Aryan peoples who spread through the Mediterranean basin and beyond during the Neo-lithic period. (13)

These sections of the Agricola have certain inaccuracies in them, which neither Tacitus nor any other author of the time had the means of correcting. Nor are we very much better informed about the details of the origin of man in these islands. However, the errors of Tacitus lie in his theory of origins rather than in his actual description of the state of affairs that was contemporary with him. No doubt the observations are generalised; but when the reader learns, later on, of battles with the Silures and the Caledonians he can visualise the physical appearance of the opponents of Rome and thus he may understand the book more vividly.

3. 3. WARFARE AND CLIMATE

In c.12 Tacitus turns his attention to British methods of warfare and to the climate of the islands. It seems entirely appropriate that having described the physique of those who fought against Rome he should mention their strategy, tactics and armaments. Once again a picture is built up which will enable the reader to visualise better the nature of the battles to be described later on. The double purpose of these sections is now becoming clearer. They not only give details which were thought to be de rigueur in works of this kind but they also provide relevant information enabling the later narrative sections to move along without interruptions for the purpose of description which, though necessary, would impede the flow of events, if given at each particular point.

Overall the natives were strongest in their infantry. However, some tribes used war chariots. The social structure of these fighting units was odd. The drivers had the higher status and the combatants the lower. It seems clear that this style of warfare was not general. In earlier times it had been common in Gaul, but there it had died out, as it was dying in Britain. The chariots were, however, to reappear at the battle of Mons Graupius. Even when driverless the panic-stricken horses galloped into the Roman ranks dragging their chariot with them and spreading confusion among the formations of the army. (14)

By the first century whatever unity the peoples had ever enjoyed was seriously broken up. They were now located in small states whose princes warred with each other. Indeed, the disunity of the tribes had been one of the most important and helpful factors in the invasion. The chieftains could not even combine before a common danger. They fought individually and fell one by one.

There was heavy rainfall in Britain and there were terrible mists; but at least the climate was not very cold. Moist and temperate would be the best description. The length of the day was longer than in Rome. Even the night was bright and in the extreme north it was short as well. There was but a brief spell between the twilight of one day and the dawn of another. Indeed, if there is no cloud, he wrote, the sun can be seen throughout the night. It seems to travel along the horizon rather than dip beneath it. The reason for this oddity, he argues, lies in the fact that because the ends of the earth are flat they cast only low shadows. Darkness cannot rise to any height. It reaches neither the sky nor the stars.

The soil will produce all manner of crops except those dependent upon a warm climate. The crops grow quickly but the moistness of the land and air prevents them from ripening rapidly. There are also considerable mineral deposits. Those of silver, gold and precious metals are justification alone for the worthwhileness of the conquest. Pearls were also to be found but they were inferior to those of the Red Sea. The cause may lie in the pearls themselves or it could be the way they have been harvested. Tacitus would like to believe that the former was the case.

We turn now to comment upon some of the important details Tacitus has laid before the reader. Archaeology has shown that the war chariots in use were lightly constructed of wood and wickerwork and generally drawn by a pair of ponies. The charioteers did not fight nor did the warriors fight from the chariots. They were small troop-carrying vehicles that introduced a high degree of mobility into Celtic warfare. Some authors had suggested that the warriors ran out along the central shaft, as the chariot was in full charge and so struck out at the enemy. (15) This can only be considered a remarkable feat when the ponies were even trotting over open ground. It would be interesting to find out whether in fact it is possible to balance oneself between the galloping horses and then strike at an enemy beyond either of them. We should relate certain details of battle preparations to the British methods of warfare.

These occur at different points in the text. To some extent they are overshadowed by the convention of ancient historians who constructed battle speeches, for both sides, as a way of setting the scene for the conflict to follow. It seems as though there was a good deal of talking by the Celts before battle. There were "pep-talks" which aimed to encourage them and demoralise their enemies. There was also a good deal of braggadocio both in word and deed. The elaborately worked equipment may have one of its roles in such preparations. By means of a display of armed might they hoped to overwhelm their opponents psychologically before physical attack; and at the same time they worked themselves up into a pitch of fervour out of which military success might come. Something of this comes across in the final battle of Boudicca's revolt. Then the Britons brought their families to witness the final downfall of the Romans. Instead their wagons became the obstacle from which they themselves could not escape death as they were rolled up against them.

Nothing is said by Tacitus about the British hill forts and dyked enclosures. These were important items of defence, where the emphasis was upon a more static form of warfare than that envisaged by the use of chariots. The presence of such defences can be inferred from the text

of Tacitus when he describes the battles which took place. Here the Annals are more illuminating than the Agriicola. (16) The frequency with which such fortifications occur when correlated with the statement in the Agriicola that "originally people were subject to kings; now the quarrels and ambitions of petty chieftains divide them" (c.12) has led to the common assumption that there was political anarchy in Britain. However, the evidence may also be taken to point in a different direction. The hill forts could have been bases for a large chariot army (or armies). Thus the reason for their intermittent occupation could have been that they were only required in time of war; in between they were kept on a 'care and maintenance' basis. At the same time such sites could also be used as places of refuge for the surrounding population during times of trouble.

In the epoch preceding the Roman invasion the Belgic tribes tended to settle in lower lying areas. This led to the gradual abandonment of hill forts, in their zones of primary settlement. Political changes also increased the size of the political units and this too tended to reduce their numbers. They seemed to prefer route centres and lines of communication, which may well indicate a desire to exercise control over economically strategic points. Among these newer fortifications we must rank the great oppidum at Colchester together with Silchester and Stanwix. The fact that none of these is exactly like those on the continent need not drive the scholar to think that the British were insular, with all the connotations of backwardness, but can lead to the conclusion that human inventiveness altered inherited designs to suit the needs of the times. (17)

Nonetheless there was disunity in Britain. About this subject the educated Roman was, perhaps, best informed. From the time of Julius Caesar the government had been aware of cross-channel sympathy for anti-Roman causes together with tribal conflicts. When the actual invasion is studied we shall see this truth in more detail.

Tacitus introduces a short section on the climate of Britain. The recent changes in our own climate must incline us to accept his description of it during his own times. When we also consider how much time Agricola spent in the highland zone of Britain, where there is rarely an annual rainfall of less than 36", the force of his son-in-law's observation is apparent. The climate of Britain did not impede Agricola's progress anymore than the opposition of the native tribes. We should note, however, that modern studies have indicated that from c.100 BC to c.300 AD Britain experienced a warmer and drier spell of weather than preceded or followed it. (18)

We should therefore bear in mind that a changed distribution of rainfall might well have affected the pattern of population density. This would in turn affect the choice of areas worth occupying next and also, perhaps, the principle centres of opposition. For example, if the West coast of Scotland were drier than now and supporting a greater population, who used the seaways a great deal, these factors might be given greater importance in deciding why Agricola stayed clear of the western highlands. It was not the mountains alone that kept him out but their combination with other factors. Romans had fought in other mountains successfully, after all.

Like Caesar, Tacitus notes the increased length of day in the summer time, especially in the north of the island. He is silent about the shortness of the day during the winter and this might indicate that the winter quarters of the army tended to be further south during the years of campaigning. However, there can be no doubt that when the forts were built, this fact would be borne home to the Roman troops. Unlike Caesar, Tacitus offers an explanation of the difference in the length of day. Perhaps we are not obliged to accept that Tacitus thought the world was flat; for, in common with many of his contemporaries, he may well not have held this view. Nonetheless he needed some means whereby his southern based readers could visualise a land of midnight sun - a contradiction in terms - where there were long hours of twilight - unknown in the south - and when on clear nights it seemed as though the sun never went down. When he uses the odd phrase that nightfall never reached the stars he may have been trying to convey vividly the phenomenon of extensive twilight.

The phrase about the flat extremities of the earth has been dealt with by A.R. Burn, who writes picturesquely that the ^cArctic does not cast its shadow high in the land of the mid-night sun. (19) Anyone, however, who has stayed in Scotland will know that in clear weather there appears to be darkness at the rim of the horizon but not overhead, at the close of the day. It is this kind of thing that Tacitus is trying to describe and explain.

Despite these long northern summer days there was a lack of sunshine, which prevented the cultivation of olives, vines and other Mediterranean fruits. Tacitus writes correctly that germination was easy but that harvesting became a problem because the ripening process was so slow. Wet weather was then, and is still, a problem in all but the most exceptional of years. Some people have thought that viticulture was carried on in Britain, at least in the southern part of the island. Recently doubt has been cast upon this tradition. The remains found could be those of imported fruit. (20)

Tacitus seems to have been right in drawing attention to the number of cattle in the island. This appears to have been true particularly in the North, where ranching may well have been the dominant economic activity. Caesar drew attention to the dependence of people there upon livestock for their diet and clothing. They seem to have been rather like the Masai of East Africa. It is also arguable that it was this region that reared the horses which were necessary for drawing the war chariots, to which reference has already been made. Animals were also as important for their hides as on the hoof and the former constituted a significant commodity for export. The same is also true of silver, gold and other metals. The Romans were to be disappointed of their hope that Britain would prove to be a fabulous land of metals. There were, in fact, but few in the South. More were to be found in the hills of the North and West. These areas the Romans did not acquire until the days of the Flavians. Enough was already being produced at a fairly early stage of the occupation to seem to make the invasion worth-while. Derbyshire lead seemed to be on the market at a relatively early stage. Perhaps that was the first fruit of the relationship between Rome and the Brigantian queen Cartimandua, if here we may assume that her territories reached so far to the south. (21)

3. 4. THE ATTITUDE OF THE PEOPLE

In c.13 of the Agricola Tacitus devotes a short section to a description of the attitude of the people themselves. He cannot be gainsaid for there is no other direct evidence. National and racial characteristics of this kind are most difficult to assess and accept but the indirect evidence of the troubles which befell Rome during the first fifty years of occupation tend to confirm Tacitus's description of the people. They would discharge their obligations if there were no manifest injustice. Though they tended to accept foreign rule, abject slavery was intolerable. One must be careful here not to receive this opinion too readily, since Tacitus is somewhat addicted to the idea of the "noble savage" held in contrast with the decadent Roman. We should also note that Agricola dealt with abuses both in the levying of tribute and collection of dues. (c.19) The reader is thus enabled to see why it was that Agricola was well regarded by his subjects. He was uncorrupt; which was more than could be said of some of his predecessors. In such circumstances the arts of peace had chance to flourish. Under the previous administrations with endemic wars and revolts such development had hardly been possible.

WADGE
A MAP BASED ON INFORMATION
GIVEN BY TACITUS.

OPEN
SEA.

INDENTED
COASTLINE.
SEA LOCUS.

IRREGULAR
LAND MASS

↑ THULE
ORCADES

CALEDONIA.
MOUNTAINS.

? MONS
? GRAPPIUS.

? FORESTI
TRIBE

TANAUS
FL.
CLOTA
FL.

BODOTRIA
R.

? PORTUS
TRUCCULENSIS

IRELAND.

BRITAIN -
ELONGATED
SHOULDER
BLADE

↑↓ RIVERS AND FORESTS ↓↑

BRIGANTES

MONA.
STRAITS.

ORDOVICES

SILURES

COLCHESTER.

PROVINCIA
KINGDOM OF
COGIDUBNUS.

CHANNEL.

GAUL.

← PAIN

3. 5. THE VALUE OF THE GEOGRAPHICAL AND ETHNOGRAPHICAL MATERIAL

How does Tacitus compare with other writers on Britain? Most of them were in no better position than Tacitus himself. They were taking their material second-hand. Pytheas was perhaps the most important, since he seems to have visited the island himself. Much of the later material is derived substantially from him. Strabo (c.64 BC- 21 AD) has little to contribute about Britain. Mela who was writing during the reign of Caligula (37 - 41 AD) gives a popular summary of Strabo. The Elder Pliny has some valuable facts in his Natural History which Tacitus may have read, when it appeared in 77 AD. Ptolemy, who generally commands great respect, was, perhaps, a younger contemporary of Tacitus himself. As he was writing between c.127 and 148 AD his information could have been derived from a time later than the point at which the Agricola was written. Diodorus Siculus wrote during the time of Julius Caesar and brought together geographical information that was available at that time.

From the Roman point of view Caesar himself was, perhaps, the most important writer. It was after all some centuries since Pytheas had composed his account. Caesar's were at least nearer to the time of the empire as well as based upon observation and questioning by the writer himself. He had declared that inland Britain was occupied by tribes who claimed to be indigenous. The maritime zones had been peopled by migrants from various parts of Gaul. Archaeological studies have largely verified this opinion and Tacitus does not contradict it. His explanations, as we have seen, are another matter.

It was Caesar who drew attention to the importance of cattle ranching in the areas beyond those over which he marched. But both writers refer to the presence of metals, the nature of the climate and to the shape of the island, even though they use different images to express it. Unlike Tacitus, Caesar gives approximate measurements for the size of the island. This was perhaps something that Tacitus would never do with his disdain of mundane details. In the end, however, Tacitus gives almost as much information as Caesar but the latter presents it in a more factual manner. Given the amount of space which he felt he could give to these subjects we may think that Tacitus gave his readers sufficient background information so that they could understand the subsequent action. It is necessary for us to keep in mind that he did not intend the material to provide a picture of the province but the context in which Agricola had to work. For that purpose there is light enough.

Modern scholars, however, find a vagueness in Tacitus which makes the task of reconstruction of the past more difficult. While we appreciate

the reasons for this, there is a certain disappointment. Though he mentions some locations they cannot be located now with any accuracy. Mons Graupius and Portus Trucculensis and the tribe of the Boresti may exercise the ingenuity of the scholars but in the end they remain elusive. The map opposite will convey what Tacitus actually wrote down about Britain. Though it would not satisfy a modern cartographer it might be thought sufficient for its purpose. But let us ask for example, how could Tacitus give a precise reference for the battle of Mons Graupius? He had shown clearly enough that Agricola was advancing North and at the end of his campaigning fought a victorious battle. But did Agricola himself know precisely where he was? He must have known his location in relation to the ground he had covered but what sort of absolute reference could Tacitus have given that would have enabled later generations to find the site with ease? Mons Graupius, then as now, was a famous victory won "somewhere up north". Furthermore, we might think that Tacitus was not the first historian to think that by giving the geographical name during his own times he had thereby identified a place clearly enough. Syme is right when he comments that in the operations against Caratacus the campaign took place in country "wholly refractory to geographical terminology" where no names could be given to the rivers and fortresses in the land of the Ordovices, where the British leader was encountered and defeated (22)

Furneaux and Anderson are, no doubt, right to assert that Tacitus "attached little value to proper names as giving weight dignity and colour to a picturesque narrative". (23) Yet even they may not have weighed sufficiently the problem of making a presentation in the circumstances with which Tacitus was confronted. A carefully constructed roll of names may not contribute dignity to a narrative so much as boredom and confusion. Colour is not given merely by the use of proper nouns! It is the overall evocation of a scene that gives a sense of the picturesque. This we have already seen in our discussion of Tacitus as a military historian. The need to give weight to an account has to be interpreted in the sense of the accuracy which can be conveyed within the limits of the knowledge available at the time of writing. Nothing Tacitus could do would make British names any less strange nor sites more precise in the reader's mind.

Since Agricola spent most of his governorship in the North there was no point in describing conditions in the South. But when attention was turned to the North, what was there to describe which could have had significance for Tacitus' readers?

Again, the ethnography may be regarded as defective from the point of view of a modern anthropologist; but could it really be anything else?

Burn is more understanding than Furneaux and Anderson. He writes that the ethnography is excellent, even though he allows that there is no known migration from Germany. He rightly points out that there must have been pre-Celtic groups in the islands, subjected to the rule of the Celts. They would be unknown to Tacitus, almost inevitably. Traces of them have been found in the pre-Celtic, pre Indo-European language of the Picts, written as Ogam script. This may be a partial explanation of the physical appearance of the Caledonians. But this is the guess of a modern historian, placed alongside the guess of an ancient one! Burn, however, would allow for a migration up the Atlantic coast. These people he would call the Iberians, from their country of origin. They left their mesolithic monuments behind them and constitute the "dark western element in our population". (24)

However, the relevance of this material does not lie so much with anthropology as with the literary purpose of the Agricola. The silence about religion and social organization is itself instructive. Military affairs were what occupied his attention. Thus the ethnography enables Tacitus to draw out the martial spirit of the Britons, whose opposition to Rome was to take up so large a place in the ensuing narrative. What appears at first sight to be an imbalance is directly related to the hero's military purpose.

It is in scientific explanations that Tacitus is most vulnerable to criticism. His comments about the flat extremities of the earth and the sluggish northern seas are often thought jejune. "It is difficult to suppose Tacitus ignorant of the spherical form of the earth, known to scientific Greeks from the fourth century BC and such Romans as Cicero, Seneca and Pliny, but his language can hardly be explained as merely rhetorical and popular". (25) Tacitus was not to be the last historian to get into difficulties over scientific matters! It does seem as though his knowledge, in some ways, was behind the best standards of the day: a small weakness in a work which did not aim to be an account of natural phenomena but a laudatory biography of a governor, general, and ideal public servant.

A modern writer may believe that when he criticises the vagueness of Tacitus he intends no adverse judgement; but merely wishes to draw attention to what is omitted or dealt with unsatisfactorily. Nonetheless the implication can hardly be avoided that Tacitus should have known and should have included the material which was lacking. Otherwise the criticism is not worth making. The obvious course then would be to write up what modern scholarship has found out without any innuendoes against

the ancient historian. Once it is seen to be unreasonable to expect a full treatment of these subjects in the Agricola, the reader can grasp more easily that the presentation in this work is controlled by the author's literary purpose rather than by carelessness.

Now that the earlier career of Agricola has been described, together with the geographical and anthropological background, it only remained for Tacitus to ensure that the reader understood how Rome came to invade the island so that the position inherited by Agricola on his appointment is understood. Since this section is placed at the point of his entry into the province, the reader has to recollect Agricola's earlier period of service in Britain; but this is more directly related to his subject's rise to success than to the history of the province. In c.14. Tacitus proceeds to a lightening sketch of the previous history of the province and to this we ourselves must now turn. (26)

Footnotes for section 3

- (1) J.Caesar.Gallic War.c.5.
- (2) Dio Cassius Roman History. 60.
- (3) J.Caesar.Gallic War. 5.13.
- (4) Censorinus De. Die. Nat. 18
- (5) Eutrop 7. 13. 2-3
- (6) W. Smith Tacitus 1875 p.263
- (7) Furneaux & Anderson p.xxii
- (8) *ibid* p.xxxviii. see also Ogilvie & Richmond p.35
- (9) *ibid* p.xxxviii.
- (10) *ibid* p.xli.
- (11) Much of this is surmise. They may have been Picts who moved south; or people of the Glastonbury type, who were, perhaps, pushed out by the invading Belgae; or they may have been refugees from the first areas of Agricola's advance northwards. The second possibility seems to find most support. Furthermore, we might bear in mind the possibility that these invaders of the Highlands and Islands conquered a pre-Celtic group already in the area. see A.R. Burn Tacitus on Britain; ed. T.A. Dorey Tacitus. London 1969 pp.35-61
- (12) Burn in Dorey. *op.cit.*
- (13) Burn in Dorey. *op.cit.*
- (14) J. Wachter Coming of Rome. London 1979 p.34. Agricolae c.36.
- (15) J.Caesar.Gallic War.c.5.
- (16) Annals 12. 31.
- (17) Wachter *op.cit.* pp.37-38.
- (18) H.H. Lamb. Climate: present and future. vol.2 caps 13, 17. London 1979. Together with private correspondence with the author.
The importance of the climate does not lie so much in the way the army worked through it but rather in its affect upon vegetation and terrain, with the consequent result upon centres of habitation and agriculture. e.g. South Lancashire was covered by an extensive area of marshland which was apparently very thinly populated. This may explain something of the distribution of people among the Brigantian tribal areas and the reason for a Roman army thrust from the eastern side of the country which swung west only when Stainmore was reached.
- (19) Burn in Dorey *op.cit.*
- (20) D. Williams. Viticulture in Roman Britain. Britannia. VIII. 1977 p.327 FF
- (21) If it is accepted that the fort at Templeborough could well have been to support Eborac then we might argue that it would not stand right on the border of the tribal area but rather in relation to some significant site. The fort at Brough in Derbyshire is not very far away and seems to have been clearly related to the protection of the mining operations. Since the Brigantes held most of the Pennines, why not the southernmost section?
Frere. Britannia. rev. ed. 1978 p. 101
Brough seems to be a Flavian site. Rev. ed. R.G. Collingwood Archaeology of Roman Britain. pp.35, 42-3.

- (22) Syme *op. cit.* pp. 394-5.
- (23) Furneaux & Anderson. p. xxxix.
- (24) Burn in Dorey. *op. cit.*
- (25) Furneaux & Anderson p.74.
- (26) It might be thought that there has been either some dislocation of the text or an insertion by another hand between c.12 of the Agricola at the words caelum crebris and the end. There seems to be an obvious logical connexion between ita singuli ruerant, universi viuentur and Insi Britanni dilectum. However, the prose style of the 'economic section' does not vary from the rest. C. 12 is made up of a number of short points, that could be made in almost any order. The opening section of c.13 is another series of short presentations. There might have been some dislocation of words in the text as a result of scribal error but there are no sufficient manuscripts surviving to enable us to be sure. For the historian of Roman Britain this is not a point of substance.

SECTION 4

THE PROVINCE BEFORE THE FLAVIANS

4.1. Claudian Invasion.

4.2. Consolidation.

4.3. Crisis in Britain

4.4. Pacification.

Footnotes.

4.1. THE CLAUDIAN INVASION

Having sketched in both the geographical and anthropological background, Tacitus turns at c.13 section 2 in the Agricola, to the Claudian invasion. He introduces this by starting with the invasion of Julius Caesar. The beginning of Roman contact is located firmly with him. He informs us that Caesar waged war successfully in the island, making himself master of the coastline. However, it may be said that he showed Britain to Rome rather than handed it over. Soon after these expeditions the advent of the civil wars put the island out of mind for a considerable period. Even when the principate was established Augustus did not resume his uncle's policy. On the contrary he continued the act of forgetting, which Tiberius then took as a prescription. Praeceptum is the word used. Gaius Caligula meditated an invasion, but his unstable mind soon turned to other things, before the idea could be translated into a result. It was Claudius who carried off the great enterprise. Legions and auxiliaries were transported across the Channel, without mishap. Vespasian emerged as an important military figure, which foreshadowed his future greatness. Tribes were conquered and kings surrendered. The description is brief, no doubt because this too falls under the heading of "The Prelude to Agricola". Tacitus has thus embarked upon a description in parvo of the extant situation inherited by Agricola when he entered upon his governorship. In analysing this passage we may begin by noticing that most scholars place Roman interest in Britain no earlier than Caesar. Even then they assume that the concern arose out of his campaigns in Gaul. His opponents apparently received help from the inhabitants of the island. The degree of success achieved by Caesar is less important for Tacitus and for us than the establishment of Britain upon the Roman political map. Tacitus pays tribute to the success of the raids. The inhabitants were defeated. The coastline was held, in part; but there was no continuing military presence. Caesar settled for payments and hostages. The phrase "may be said to have shown the island rather than have handed it over" is a graceful Tacitean way of reminding the reader that the Roman army withdrew. The author of the Agricola could not be expected, in so brief a work, which was devoted to the memory of his father in law, to have explained the intricacies of Roman-British relations during the period between 54BC and 43 AD. The evidence is not easily put together, nor is it strictly relevant to our purpose, but its general purport is not without importance for this study. We must retrace our steps a little. Reference has already been made to migrations across the Channel. By Caesar's time the Belgae had established themselves, in a pincer shaped area between the Essex coast on the North and the East coast of Kent to the South, with the two lines meeting

in the middle Thames. This was the principal region but there was a secondary area along the Sussex coast, which was to be important later. In the midst of this primary area lay the Catuvellauni. For long it has been the received view that they were a Belgic tribe of aggressive intent, who, by degrees, sought to absorb their neighbours. More recently this view has been questioned. A careful study of the coinage suggests that this people was ruled over by Cassivellaunus, who confronted Caesar with war chariots. These had ceased to be used on the mainland and may therefore indicate the arrival of these people in the island at a rather earlier time than has hitherto been proposed. If the Catuvellauni were part of the Marnian migration, then it would not be surprising if they were hostile to incoming Belgae, like the Trinovantes, who might well have occupied their lands in North Essex. By degrees they found themselves surrounded by newcomers. While they made an alliance to face Caesar, it soon fell apart again when the Trinovantes made a separate peace with Rome. Perhaps the latter thought this was one way of turning the tables upon the Catuvellauni (1). At all events it gave them some measure of protection and seems to have led to increased trade with Gaul.

Some years after Caesar's departure there were important developments along the Sussex coast. During the failure of the great rebellion of 52BC, Commius, who had thrown in his lot with Vercingetorix, was forced to flee. He crossed the Channel with a considerable following and from the distribution of his coins seems to have established a kingdom in West Sussex and East Hampshire. From this area he appears to have thrust forward into the region of the middle Thames. When he and Cassivellaunus died, the nature of political events in the subsequent years becomes difficult to follow. Tasciovanus, who seems to have succeeded Cassivellaunus, as being either his son or grandson, moved his capital to Verulamium and brought pressure to bear upon the Trinovantes. He may even have occupied their capital at Camulodunum. This was risky since the Trinovantes had a treaty with Rome. When Augustus visited Gaul, he may have withdrawn from it as an act of prudence. Tincommius, who succeeded Commius, struck up a better relationship with Rome and it may well have been formalized in a treaty. However, the change of stance may not have met with general approval. Part of the tribe may have moved off into the reaches of the upper Thames and Gloucestershire to form the tribe known to us as the Dobunni. If Rome's memory of the treaty with the Trinovantes had grown dim, this relationship was fresh and bright. The emergence of coin types as closely resembling those of Rome may even indicate the presence of Roman craftsmen among these people. Assuming that there was, indeed, a treaty, then Augustus had not only a foothold in Britain at the point of the

short sea crossing but had no need of military intervention. (The Trinovantes obviously still stood in some reasonable relationship with Rome and the Catuvellauni seemed to be a clear threat to them and the heirs of Commius.) Here was now a balance of power in which Roman interests were served. When Tacitus wrote "Britain was lost in deep oblivion and also in peace: Augustus called that policy", he did not mean there was a refusal to pay attention to Britain but rather a specific decision not to invade it. For a variety of reasons Augustus had decided upon this course but nonetheless it lay within the Roman sphere of interest. Treaty relationships would serve Rome well enough, as long as the balance held. (The inland areas were of quite secondary importance). Over a period of time this balance was radically disturbed. Tincommius suffered at the hands of his brothers Eppillus and Verica. He fled to Rome but no aid was forthcoming to restore him to his throne. Augustus recognised each of his supplanters in turn and since he may have accorded them the title rex they may have had the status of client kings. (A fact which will be important during the first decades of the Roman occupation). Verica ousted Eppillus, who in his turn overthrew Dubnovellaunos, who ruled in Kent. He managed to establish himself on the North bank of the Thames estuary as king of the Trinovantes, in succession to Addemarus where the throne was perhaps vacant after his death.

Meanwhile Tasciovanus led the Catuvellauni northwards into the English midlands and perhaps even into West Kent. Cunobelin, who styled himself son of Tasciovanus, appeared at Camulodunum, the capital of the Trinovantes. His declaration that he was the son of Tasciovanus has generally been accepted at face value. If so, then his anti-Roman spirit was quite outstanding. His predecessors had avoided conflict with the Trinovantes and extended their rule in other regions. He seems to have advanced into the most sensitive area. It has even been thought that he attempted this successful coup while his father was still alive. More recently an alternative explanation has been offered. Here Cunobelin is a Trinovantian nobleman who overthrew Dubnovellaunos and then conquered the Catuvellauni. In order to establish the right credentials for this coup de main he declared himself the son of Tasciovanus. If this were the case it would represent both an amazing about face among the Trinovantes and a great reversal of the strength between the two tribes. Furthermore, we should recollect that the Roman advance in 43 AD was clearly against the Catuvellauni. It would have been odd if, then, Cunobelin as a Trinovantian had abandoned that name in favour of the tribe he had conquered.(2) However, those who seek power and achieve it often do quite unpredictable things in order to establish their

legitimacy and consolidate their position. At all events the tribal areas of the Catuvellauni and Trinovantes had a common ruler soon after Varus and his legions were destroyed in Germany. Imperial preoccupation with this disaster afforded Cunobelin favourable circumstances, since it left him free to strengthen his position and able to disregard the technical relationship with which the Trinovantes were connected to Rome. In the aftermath of these troubles, Cunobelin may even have found a certain degree of de facto acceptance with the emperor. It might well be that he was one of the British rulers who sent embassies to Rome and made offering at the Capitol. As he styles himself rex on some coins the word might indicate a certain degree of imperial acceptance. Certainly trade relations seem to have been actively encouraged. However, the Catuvellaunian policy of expansion continued unabated. The brother of Cunobelin, Epaticcus, cut into the northern part of the Atrebatian kingdom and into eastern Kent. Rome did not stir to support her client king. Tiberius, perhaps, would not rouse himself for the sake of such internal border changes. As long as Verica ruled over the main part of the Atrebates and Cunobelin encouraged trade with Rome the balance of power still seemed to hold. As the latter became older the anti-Roman spirit became more obvious again. Togodumnus and Caratacus were active during their father's declining years. By about 40 AD, Verica's realm was much reduced in size. Perhaps it was no more than an area round Chichester and Selsey Bill. Further advances were made up the Thames by them, into the lands of the Dobunni and a petty kingdom was established there. Nor were the Iceni of East Anglia free from pressure, even though they managed to fend off the main thrust, aided by the nature of the terrain, perhaps. In 40 AD these two brothers ejected their other brother, Adminius, from the kingdom. He fled to Rome. Caligula was petitioned for aid to recover his kingdom, which lay mainly in Kent. The emperor marshalled an army at Boulogne but soon removed it to become preoccupied with other things. Soon afterwards Cunobelin died and the energy of the belligerent brothers was unbridled. The surviving fragment of the Atrebatian kingdom was quickly annexed. Verica fled to Rome. It was the final insult. In addition, an anti-Roman state now controlled much of the south east of England. The balance of power was completely upset. When the extradition of Verica was demanded the affront was compounded. The brothers commissioned disturbances either along the Gaulish coast or against Roman merchants. These were provocative acts. The latter were probably more numerous. Certainly the trade appears to have been lucrative and the market valuable, so that commerce and prestige combined

[illegible]

to make action necessary. "There existed in Britain throughout this period a strong anti-Roman force which had been obliged to bow before the power and political realism of Cunobelin but found ready ears and hearts in the young princes especially Caratacus. Such a force implies an organization to ensure continuity and direction and the obvious candidate is the Druidic priesthood." (3)

Tacitus is silent about the ideological or religious forces behind the anti-Roman attitude of the Catuvellauni. Nor does he have much to say about the Druids. They feature most in his account of Suetonius Paulinus's assault on Anglesey. (Annals.14.30) On the whole we shall do well to note the force of Tacitus's silence on this point. To have a Druidic priesthood inspiring and directing opposition to Rome from the time Caesar crossed into Gaul, and which still continued in that role after Claudius invaded Britain is to imply a degree of coordinated organization and inflexibility of purpose which appears to run counter to the evident disunity that ~~the British tribes displayed when faced~~ by the imperial forces. Far from being united, Tacitus emphasizes their disunity. He allows it to be one of the most helpful factors working for Roman success. During the Gallic wars the Druids never actually appeared during any of the campaigns. Nor do they feature in the works of Tacitus except during the invasion of an island where an important sanctuary was housed. Their appearance and imprecations added to the drama of the occasion. We have no direct evidence to suggest that they were a potent force in either Gaulish or British politics.(4)

So much for the British side. What of the Roman? The actual motivation of Claudius eludes us. In general, Tacitus treats the emperor as little more than a puppet figure, except for the work he did as Censor. The lost books of the Annals may have contained material which displayed him as a more independent figure. The general tradition, however, has been to portray Claudius as the prisoner of his entourage. It has been well-argued that he wished to emulate Caesar.(5) Many leaders have dreamed such dreams but usually there has had to be some occasion of policy requiring action along those desirable lines. Here it is commonly thought that one who became emperor in so improbable a fashion after a life-time spent on the fringe of the imperial house needed to carry off some dramatic deed in order to bolster his prestige at Rome. Thus to take Caesar as the model for the preparation to invade was one thing; to use him as a casus belli was quite another. There may well have been quite prosaic reasons. Britain could have been valuable as a source of manpower for the auxilia. Mr Charlesworth has indicated

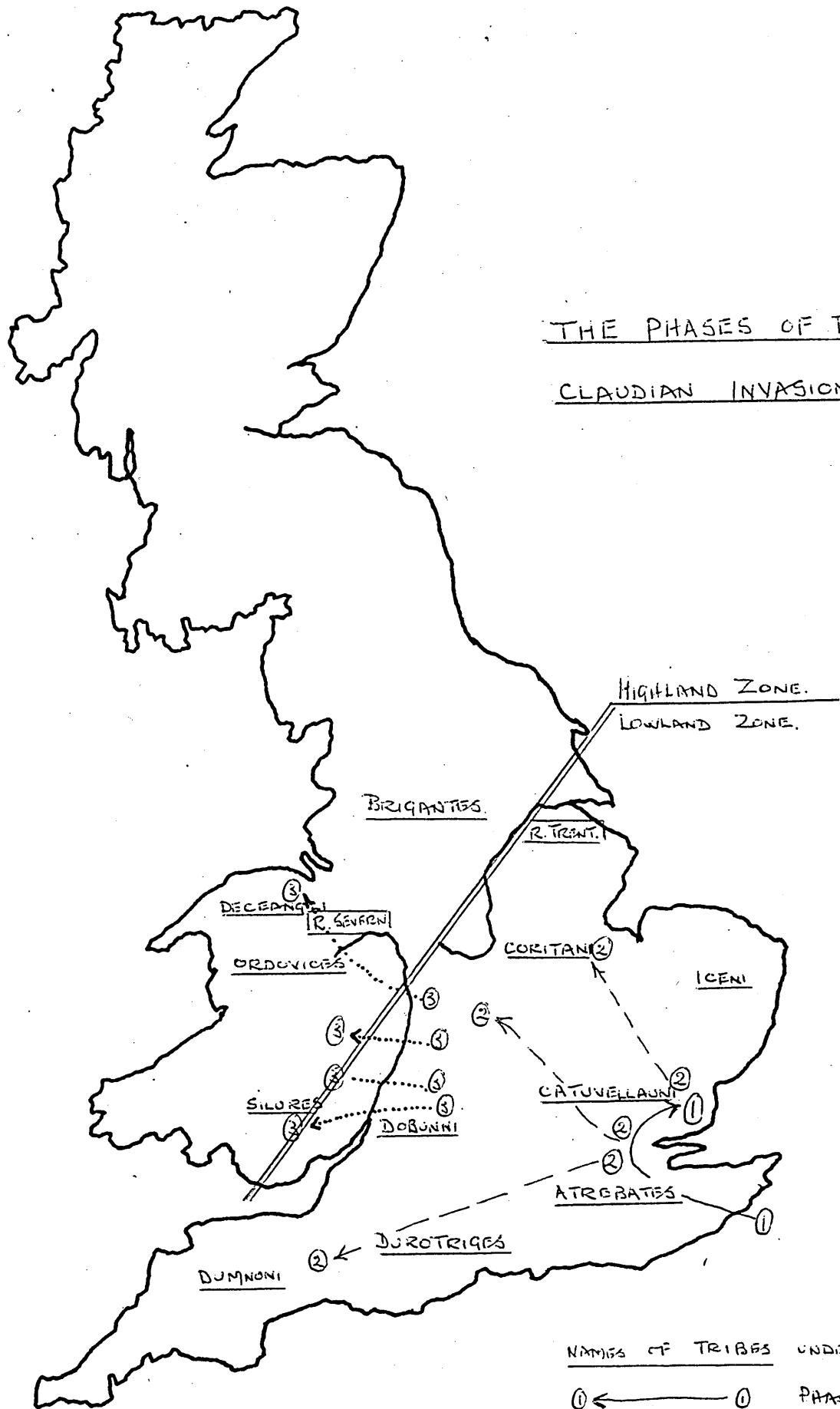
the extent to which the authorities drew upon British manpower.(6) Mineral wealth may also have been important. If so, some decades passed before the rewards were fully reaped but Tacitus specifically noted the presence of gold, silver and other metals in the Agricola c.12. But since trading relations had built up in the previous decades, even with the potentially hostile Catuvellauni and had not been interrupted, there seems to be no commercial reason for the conquest. Treaties had already secured what was necessary. We must look elsewhere to discover the circumstances that produced the invasion. For these we are bound to consider politics in the island and particularly the expulsion of Verica with the following aggressive events. The Roman character did not take slights easily. There was enough here to provoke an imperial power into making an over-whelming response to petty insults.

Perhaps, in some ways, Tacitus regarded these events as peripheral to his purpose but he may have wished to allude to them by means of a brief phrase so that his readers could recall what had happened. As Syme has pointed out, we may sometimes take it that Tacitus is silent because he could assume that his readers already had the knowledge.(7) When necessary, Tacitus could expand his material. Caratacus is afforded lengthy treatment in the Annals. This must demonstrate his status as a significant figure in Rome's relationship with the island. But within the Agricola the perspective is different. The invasion is not only important in itself but also for the way it brought Vespasian forward, who was himself to be the means of advancing not only Agricola but Tacitus himself.

By singling out Vespasian, Tacitus associates him not only with Britain but also with an expansionist policy towards it. Agricola is the conclusion of what Vespasian began. However, he gives a misleading impression about the status of Vespasian in the expeditionary force. The Latin reads "adsumpto in partem rerum Vespasiano". This seems to require translation as "Vespasian obtained a share in the undertaking". This could be taken to mean that Vespasian himself was in command of the expedition. We know that this was not the case. Aulus Plautius was the commander.(8) Vespasian commanded the IInd Legion. A few brief strokes describe the campaign. It is Suetonius who supplies a helpful detail, in informing us of the sort of war Vespasian had. Tacitus merely comments that "people were conquered, kings captured" : the same information without any of the detail.

No description of the Claudian invasion from the pen of Tacitus (9) has survived. For that we are dependent upon Dio Cassius, supplemented a

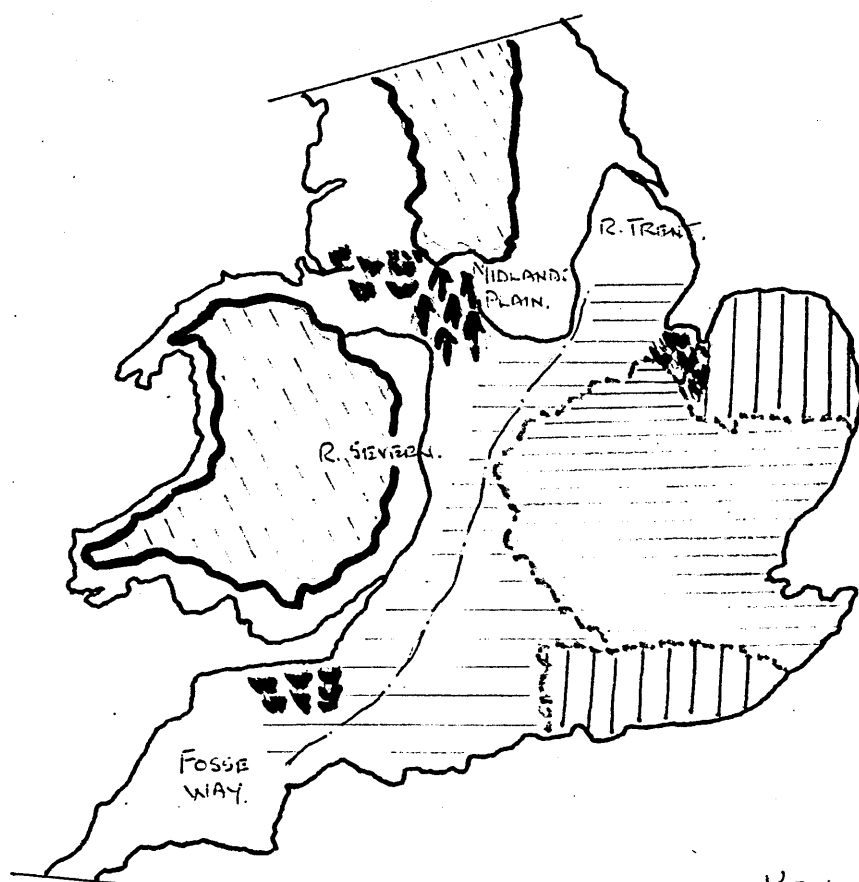
THE PHASES OF THE CLAUDIAN INVASION





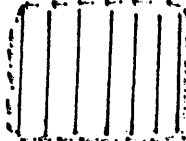



KEY

- | <u>NAMES OF TRIBES UNDERLINED</u> | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------|----------|
| ① | ←—————① | PHASE 1. |
| ② | ←-----② | PHASE 2. |
| ③ | ←.....③ | PHASE 3. |

THE PROVINCE
BEFORE THE FLAVIANS.



KEY.

	CATUVELLAUNI.	'DIRECT RULE'
	OTHER TRIBES.	
	CLIENT STATES.	'INDIRECT RULE'
	MARSHLAND	
	FOREST	
	HIGH GROUND	

little by some other authors. From Dio we conclude that there was but one major battle before Claudius entered the Catuvellaunian capital of Camulodunum. Plautius sent in Vespasian to capture the critical crossing point, probably on the Medway and then join issue with the Britons. Vespasian carried off a victory; but other generals, like Geta, also played an important part in the enterprise. The rest of that stage consisted mainly of skirmishes. The features of phase two are less clearly marked. There has been some speculation about a northern expedition led by Vespasian based on these lines from Silius Italicus :

Hinc pater ignotam donabit vincere Thulem
Inque Caledonios primus trahet agmina lucos:
Compescet ripis Rhenum, reget impiger Afros,
Palmiferamque senex bello domitabit Idumen...

Both Professors A. Momigliano and E.B. Birley have taken these lines seriously enough to entertain a northern mission by Vespasian, carried out during the period of the Claudian invasion.(10) No doubt, theoretically, it could have taken place but physically it could have worn out both the troops and their commander. The distances involved were at least double those covered by King Harold of the Saxons against Tostig and Duke William, since Vespasian, as we know, has to be placed far into the West Country towards the end of the campaigning. Had such a strike into lands unknown been brought off it would have been as remarkable a feat as that executed by Suetonius Paullinus, when he crossed the Atlas Mountains. The silence of other sources, therefore, about the supposed endeavour must count against it ever happening. Finally, if it ever did occur there were no perceptible results. When Agricola pushed into the North neither he nor Tacitus imply that he was venturing into territory over which Rome had some kind of suzerainty. What is more feasible, even though unsubstantiated, is some kind of token submission by a northern tribe. If Cartimandua were on the throne at that time, it is just conceivable that Vespasian was sent to negotiate a client-kingdom relationship after overtures had been made to Plautius. Most scholars are inclined to treat the Brigantes in such a fashion even though the necessary passages from the Annals are missing. Those which remain seem to imply a long-standing relationship between Cartimandua and the Roman government.(11)

The surviving accounts of phase one of the invasion suggest that at the end of it the northern front lay quiet. Tacitus informs us that the Iceni were given client-kingdom status. This may suggest that no battles were fought over their territory. Indeed they may have given a qualified welcome to the troops since they themselves had been under pressure from the Catuvellauni. There is silence about the North-West, which also may have been quiet and where, too, pressure upon the tribes may have been

exercised by the expansionist Catuvellauni. The general tenor of the evidence is, therefore, to show that the Catuvellauni were the primary targets of the Roman invasion. Those like the Iceni and the Atrebates, and perhaps others who had suffered at their hands, were brought under indirect rule, no doubt on the grounds that Roman sovereignty was needed, in the last resort to protect them.

The conquest of the Catuvellauni, symbolised by the entrance of Claudius into Camulodunum, brought the first phase to a close. On his departure, Dio tells us, the emperor ordered Plautius to subdue the "remaining districts". This phrase suggests that either the government or Dio himself was ignorant of what lay beyond the conquered area. Phase two of the invasion was the implementation of this imperial order. The centre of attention seems to have been along the south coast. Here there was hard fighting. The remains at Maiden Castle (Dorchester) are an eloquent testimony to the sharpness of the campaign. The army had now gone beyond the territory of the Atrebates to areas which may have prized their independence. On the other hand, Caratacus, or another member of the royal house, may have sought to establish a centre of opposition in the region. He certainly seems to have retreated westwards and this area was one from which aid had been sent to the rebels in Armorica, so there may have been a history of hostility to Rome there.

With these speculations we need not be concerned. What is important is that we should note the Tacitean clue which denotes Vespasian as the fighting general of the invasion. He warranted special and honourable mention. If the first translation of "adsumpto in partem rerum" was too strong, it may at least be taken as an indication of his crucial role in the campaign, even if he were not the supreme commander. The point is that when Vespasian became emperor all this came to have another kind of significance. Vespasian was the emperor who had forwarded the career of Agricola. Above all he had appointed him Governor of Britain. Having campaigned himself in the island he knew at first hand what sort of legate was required, in order to complete the undertaking which he had helped to start in so distinguished a fashion. The policy of Agricola can thus be interpreted as a Flavian policy, enshrined, we may assume, in his mandata. Agricola finished what Vespasian began and for his pains was dishonoured by Domitian. So on the grounds of military capacity, imperial future and patronage of Agricola Vespasian warranted specific mention in this brief description of the invasion.

Tacitus now turns at c.14 of the Agricola to give a brief history of Agricola's predecessors. He mentions Aulus Plautius as the first governor and Ostorius Scapula as the second. With the latter we reach material that has survived in the manuscripts of the Annals. Of Plautius, whose time is

missing from the Annals, nothing is said in the Agricola except that he and Scapula were both distinguished soldiers. We are left to infer that Plautius himself was the commander of the expeditionary force. But of Scapula, Tacitus tells us a good deal in the Annals. To a consideration of this we now turn.

4.2. CONSOLIDATION

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In Book 12/ of the Annals we are told that Scapula inherited a chaotic situation. The surrender of the Catuvellauni and the triumphal entry into Camulodunum may have had some symbolical value but the war was not over. The original intention may have been to "protect" the subjects of the dispossessed Verica, perhaps even the pro-Roman Trinovantes, as well as to subjugate the Catuvellauni, but military developments did not allow matters to rest there. If there ever were a limited objective, it became impossible to sustain it. During the interregnum the military position had deteriorated. Tacitus states that the British had decided to use this period because they thought there would be some ineffectiveness in the Roman command during the period of changeover, which also took place during the winter, out of the campaigning season. The troops might well have been "stood down". The Britons launched a combined attack into the lands of the allies of Rome. The phrase "effusis in agrum sociorum" is sometimes translated loosely as 'broke violently into the province' but the word sociorum can properly be taken to indicate the territory of client states or allies of Rome and not that of direct Roman rule. No doubt Rome held the ultimate authority but the word provincia is not used. There is no evidence to suggest that the action was directed against the Brigantes (assuming that they were a client state by this stage). Perhaps a foray by the Coritani into the south and east cannot be ruled out, as at least part of the combined operation. If an area has to be found between the Britons who were independent and the zone occupied and ruled directly by Rome, then that must probably be the area of the river Severn and the tribe would then be the Dobunni. They may well have taken the main weight of the attack. Scholars incline to think that this was the case.(12)
The narrative of Tacitus draws attention, throughout this episode, to the role of Caratacus. He seems to have managed to construct a grand alliance from among the tribes of the western mountains including the Silures, the Ordovices and the Deceangli. Together they made a formidable fighting force. He chose the right tactics for men confronted by an army of professionals. At first, there could be no question of a military set-piece. They split, instead, into a number of groups; ranging over the land, liberating and looting. Scapula had to react in the same fashion, by ordering a series of search and destroy operations to be carried out by the light auxilia. With energy he gradually drove back the enemy. Thus

Tacitus is able to observe, as he does with Agricola's entry into the province: it is first impressions that count.

Having stabilised the position Scapula took two critical decisions:

1. he decided to disarm the provincials, and 2. to annexe additional territory. The first decision provoked a rebellion among the Iceni. This connexion between decision and result we infer, although as Syme points out, Tacitus himself does not actually make the connexion explicitly. (13) He argues that the Roman historian did not have to do so. However, it is dangerous to assume that either Tacitus knew the reasons or that he could assume his readers knew it. We could argue, with some plausibility, that Scapula's alteration of the provincial boundaries deprived the Iceni of easy access to the free or client tribes to the North. The revolt, such as it was, ended in a decisive battle in which the Romans were victorious. The location of the conflict is not given but the drama of the occasion is vividly described, since it produced an act of outstanding heroism on the part of the governor's son. The revolt may not have been total or widespread since it did not warrant the termination of client-kingdom status, which continued until the death of the king. Having demolished the Iceni Scapula turned the North West, to launch an offensive against the Deceangli. Their lands were ravaged rather than annexed but at that point the Brigantes rose. Scapula turned aside to deal with them. The operation was successful and the tribe settled down again. The few who had taken part were put to death. The perfunctory treatment accorded to the incident inclines one to think that it was not regally led and that it lacked dramatic incident. We may regard it as a diversionary tactic designed to reduce pressure on the Deceangli. Had Scapula succeeded in consolidating his position, once the Celtic sea was reached, the tribes of Wales would have been cut off from receiving assistance from those of the North. The diversion succeeded. Scapula withdrew from the territory of the Deceangli but brought the frontier of the province forward to two major rivers and then marched against the Silures. This entailed a radical realignment of forces. The legion stationed at Colchester was brought across country to face the Silures. Syme remarks, rather oddly, that "at first sight the Silures far to the West would seem wholly out of relation to anything that might happen at Camulodunum". (14) The logistics of redeployment seem fairly clear. Scapula needed reinforcements. The legion at Colchester was called forward to provide them. Veterans provided a reserve presence in the old base. In accordance with his practice of not providing petty detail, Tacitus gives us neither the name of the legion which was moved nor of the name of the new depot. Archaeology, however, makes clear that it was XX Legion and the site was Gloucester. He does refer however to the establishment of a Roman colony of veterans at Colchester. Something that would be significant later.

The change could have had a profound effect upon the Trinovantes. Up till then they had looked to Rome for support. Perhaps they had been pro-Roman to the extent of supporting the invasion. But if they looked to their liberation from the Catuvellauni they exchanged it for direct Roman rule. Their capital was the Catuvellaunian capital as well. That annexation was never undone. The establishment of a colony must have brought home to them that they had exchanged one form of servitude for another. Webster considers that Scapula's response to the threat posed by Caratacus was inept. "At a stroke much of the careful diplomacy the Romans and their allies had developed over the previous years" was destroyed.⁽¹⁵⁾ The exsoldiers were disastrous as colonists. This point he argues retrospectively from the history of Boudicca's rebellion. Camulodunum was not the first military colony to be established. Such outposts of empire were not necessarily causes of rebellion. Scapula can hardly be blamed for not knowing at the time he made the change that the new residents would prove to be unsatisfactory. If the Trinovantes regarded themselves as the friends of Rome - as well they might - then a legionary base of soldiers on the active list might have been less offensive than demobilised men. Webster at least recognises that in making this decision Scapula was facing up to another problem. Did he need more troops for the campaign into the mountains? Yes. Then from where did he get them? Was it likely that Rome would give him a fifth legion? It was probably highly unlikely, since the war was supposed to have been won! In that case, the troops had to be found from within the province. He therefore assumed that the East was pacified and moved the only highly trained reserve he had: XX Legion. There was no choice. Significantly, Tacitus reports the redistribution without adverse comment either at this point or when the rebellion occurs later. He does criticize Roman behaviour but he does not attack the policy decision of Scapula.

The actual disarming of the province can hardly be considered a thoughtless act. Roman law was quite clear about the bearing of arms : none were allowed to carry any except weapons for the hunt. It may have irritated the Britons but on the other hand it was the first stage of any pacification. that must have followed the conquest. Militarily it was, no doubt, an advantage to have a quiet hinterland before taking the offensive. If disarmament at this time was a cause of rebellion later then one may argue that such an act could always be considered provocative and productive of unrest at the first opportunity.

Scapula was now ready to move out from his forward positions. Tacitus has told us that the governor had established a frontier of sorts in this act of disarmament: "Detrahare arma suspectis cunctaque castris Antonam et Sabrinam fluvio s cohibere parat" or cunctaque cis Trisantonam. There is a

difficult reading of the text here. Furneaux prints the former because he thinks that it is best to print the corrupt Med.text. He appeals to earlier editors and this comes to mean that the river is the Avon in Worcestershire. However, as he states, no camp has been found - certainly not at the confluence of the two rivers. Nor is it immediately apparent that taking the Avon with the Severn makes much military sense. If there were a line of forts along the rivers and Cotswold hills then the word castellis might have been expected rather than castris. One reading that has been suggested is castris ad Trisantonam and to infer from this that the river Tern was meant. This would give a site near Wroxeter. However, this might be thought to place the line too far to the North West. Had the Ordovices been engaged at this time there might be more force in the suggestion. On the whole modern scholars have abandoned this search for a convenient river and amended the manuscript after comparison with other geographers. If the a of castris is replaced by i and the rest of the word and the following word taken as one proper noun then we are liberated from finding forts on smaller tributaries of the Severn and mark out a fundamental north east-south west barrier line. Ptolemy mentions a river trisantov. (2.3.4) This is perhaps the old name for the Trent. Nennius refers to it as such or Trannonus. If this be the case then Scapula had drawn a line along two of the most significant physical features of southern Britain. The Fosse Way, soon to be built, would run almost in parallel behind it. Militarily Scapula then had two fronts: the Severn on which he attacked and the Trent which he held quiescent near the Coritani.

The incoming governor had thus established the military position, disarmed the peoples of the areas of Britain so far occupied, and redeployed his troops. He was now ready to "occupy the remaining districts" (16) with the urgency that a punitive expedition against the Silures required. Tacitus tells us that Caratacus did not risk an engagement. He retreated into the mountains of the territory of the Ordovices, (North West Wales : Modern Snowdonia). Here the terrain was quite different from anything which had faced the Roman army before in Britain. It was more vulnerable to surprise attack and the lines of supply and communication were more tenuous. The Britons knew their ground. The Silures were naturally ferocious. They were supported by all those who feared the imperium of Rome, and all of them possessed a strong belief in Caratacus personally. Only in numbers were they inferior to their opponents. In these brief lines Tacitus sets the scene for a fine dramatic piece of writing that follows.

In the first scene Tacitus conjures with the sense of fate overhanging the drama when Caratacus decides to stand and fight. We are told the way in

which he selected ground unfavourable to the advancing Roman troops, then follow the exhortations to the British troops to acquit themselves well, while the figure of Caratacus stands pre-eminent over them all. Scapula is thus placed on the psychological defensive and this is confirmed by his appreciation of the military position. All this is off-set, however, by the eagerness of the Roman army to which the senior officers themselves respond.

We now move to the battle itself in the second scene. A reconnaissance is made. A general advance is ordered but the troops are repulsed and have to regroup. The third scene portrays the success of the second Roman thrust in which the British line is rolled up by the sheer weight of numbers moving in close formation. A great victory ensued which was crowned eventually by the capture of Caratacus.

In the next "act" the scene changes to Rome, prefaced by a notice of the reputation of Caratacus. He personified the years of unrelenting opposition to Roman rule. "Even at Rome his name meant something". An oblique cut at the narrow preoccupations of a society tottering on the verge of decadence when compared with the energy of the army and the vigour of the native populations. Caratacus becomes the dominant figure of the triumphal parade. He is the man of heroic stature, rather than the emperor. The scene culminates in a superbly constructed speech about the uncertainties of fate. It is a cry for freedom in the face of Rome's remorseless imperialism. If any enemy deserved to die it was Caratacus; but his speech is brought round to an appeal for mercy; which is granted. There is nobility on one side and graciousness on the other.

Released by Claudius, Caratacus does homage not only to the emperor but to Agrippina: a shocking act which brings the reader back to the problems still present in the capital of the empire. Dramatically it is a most effective anti-climax with the pure and noble savage standing over against the personification of a corrupt society.

For the next "act" the scene reverts to Britain. We are made aware that resistance to aggressive forces is not determined by the spirit of one man alone but by the will of a whole nation. The Silures and Ordovices had lost a general and a battle but they had not lost the war. Now they were given additional strength of will by Roman propaganda; the army would exterminate the Silures to a man. Their guerilla attacks were successful; assisted, it would seem by some carelessness within the army, which thought the war was over, but made worse by the dispersal of troops who were sent on building parties for the necessary construction of forts. Scapula returned once more to a deteriorating position and died in office. Finally Didius Gallus arrives at high speed only to find that the Ordovices and Silures had gone over to a general attack. Once more there were

plundering raids and again the uneasy Brigantes stirred. Gallus was occupied on both fronts. The initiative passed from Rome. Nonetheless, Gallus was effective, even on the defensive. Through his subordinates he stabilised positions once more and held them.

Perhaps a Roman historian was unlikely to emphasize the precariousness of the imperial position in Britain. If he thought and knew from subsequent events that this was a phase of the conflict and not the totality then the full nature of the crisis might not be drawn out. Nonetheless, there was something of a crisis on the resolution of which the future of Rome in Britain depended. Webster draws attention to what is implied in the Tacitean account. We should note that though Gallus is dismissed by Tacitus for his defensive policy, there is no account of further trouble in Britain for some years. Had there been serious fighting it would have surely found a place in the Annals. On the other hand there seems to have been positive policy towards the tribes beyond the frontier. Annexation does not appear to have been sought. The matter rested there: "a problem, with only part of the island securely held, and a very difficult frontier for the army to contain".(17)

These issues do not shine through the text clearly. Militarily Tacitus seems to have possessed an almost Churchillian aggressiveness. Not only did he believe in the expansion of the empire but in the necessity for offensive tactics. This preoccupation disguises the actual effectiveness of Gallus as governor. The dismissive phrase, "content to act through subordinates and on the defensive" actually demonstrates an effective method of working. The "impressive seniority" of Gallus, to which Tacitus refers, had taught him something about handling a difficult position. The Agricola, for all its brevity, puts the point better. Gallus, we are told, maintained what had been won by his predecessors and pushed forward a few forts into remoter areas. In view of what we are told in the Annals one may assume that these forts were set among or near the Silures. Some may have been placed in Brigantia, however, as a protection for Cartimandua, who may well have been in danger from internal opponents at this time and also needed a personal escort of Roman cohorts. If the governors of Britain faced intractable military problems and the resentments that followed from disarmament, there was, at least, one area to which they could look with satisfaction. Tacitus draws attention to it with the special and honourable mention he gives to Cogidubnus. Archaeology has confirmed the aptness of the reference.(18) During the difficulties of the first years and of those which were to come the Regnenses remained loyal and the route to the continent stayed secure. The extent of the lands of the Regnenses is not entirely clear. The tribal name is not given in the text of the Agricola, but is established

from ancient geographers. It is possible that they were a composite people made up of the Atrebates and other tribes of the South and East who were wholly or partly made over to a client king. The conduct of the king seems to have struck Tacitus for he draws attention to the unfailing loyalty of King Cogidubnus.

We have already seen the changes that had taken place in that part of Britain before the invasion of Claudius. The arrangements made for the governance of this area of the province may well unite both a desire to pay a tribute to loyalty and a need to bind together groups which had long lived in tensions, which if they were to continue could affect Roman communications with the mainland. Given the dimensions of the Agricola it is remarkable that Cogidubnus gets a specific mention at all. What is, perhaps, even more noteworthy is that the reference is complimentary; only at the end does a general and sardonic political comment creep in. Certain states, Tacitus writes (c.14) were handed over to Cogidubnus as king who remained constantly loyal right down to our own times. It was an example of the old-established Roman practice whereby kings were used as tools for the enslavement of people, i.e. to Rome.

Once again the style of Tacitus does not permit precise dating. What constitutes "our own times"? It could be a period of twenty to thirty years. The context of the Agricola suggests that the civitates were handed to him at a relatively early stage; perhaps once Scapula had got South East Britain into some kind of provincial order. But it might indicate that the hand-over was made by Didius Gallus. We might get some indication by asking when his loyalty might have been needed? One possibility is during the interregnum between Plautius and Scapula. We might think that was a very early stage during the occupation to hand over civitates through which ran the principal supply route to the continent. Furthermore, since the enemy broke into the province and into the part held by allies of Rome we must presuppose a high state of military disorder which permitted tribesmen probably from Wales to reach the South East coast of Britain. There is nothing to suggest such a breakdown by the Roman forces. The second possibility is during the revolt of Boudicca. Here the steady support of a client king would be important. There is no word in either Tacitus or any other source to indicate that Cogidubnus and his peoples joined in the great revolt. The third possibility is that Cogidubnus steadily supported Vespasian during 69. This pre-supposes, in a general way, that the two had struck up some kind of relationship during the Claudian invasion when Vespasian was operating over this territory. The interpretation of the text cannot be divorced from the inscription found during the early 18th century. (RIB 91) It seems to be agreed that one may rightly infer from the praenomen and nomengentilicium that Cogidubnus was

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a Roman citizen and that he received the grant from Claudius. Further it seems to be implied that he was given senatorial rank and in that position was made legatus Augusti. There is, however, no precedent whatsoever for such an appointment. Indeed it seems almost inconceivable that Claudius should have conferred such a status upon a British king, however loyal and cooperative he had been. An examination of the inscription shows it to be damaged at this critical point and there is a good deal of restored wording required in order to produce the necessary formula together with the unknown abbreviation of rex to R. There is no precedent therefore to suggest that this restored reading is correct. For example, not even Herod the Great for all the service he gave to Rome ever became a legatus Augusti.

There is a somewhat better case for getting the damaged section to read rex magnus. This is both a Greek and a Latin title; though the latter seems to be far less generally known. The Greek usage indicated a monarch who ruled over more than one kingdom. This would agree with the statement of Tacitus and perhaps might be preferred to the more received tradition. But when Tacitus writes Cogidubno regi does he mean to Cogidubnus the King, or to Cogidubnus to be king over, or to Cogidubnus in his capacity as king? Preference must be given to the second possibility. The fact is that all authority was dependent authority as far as client kings were concerned (and indeed as far as legati were concerned as well). If Cogidubnus were a king before the invasion he was only one after it because Rome confirmed the status. If he were a member of a royal house that had no significance for any right of succession. Were he to succeed to the family's domain it could only be because Rome appointed him, or allowed that form of succession. There was no hereditary divine right of kings here. It seems inconceivable that he was chosen at random to rule not over one state but many. If he were ruling as king he might have been confirmed in his own realm like the king of the Iceni but to add to it must have been an act of government policy. There is precedent for scions of royal houses being given asylum at Rome as there are also precedents for them to be educated there. If then, for one reason or another, Cogidubnus had lived in Rome and been educated there as an exile from the Atrebatian kingdom and royal house he might well have been well-equipped to be the instrument of Roman indirect rule.

Thus, though many details and dates are hidden from us, the inscription RIB 91 confirms the words of Tacitus. Cogidubnus was accorded special honours and recognition in the Roman empire of the first century. What he actually did to deserve them we cannot know; but he was clearly well-known for his unshakable loyalty to the imperium and the ruling houses; for this he was thought to warrant special mention in the Agricola, which allows for

only one hero. Since there is no reason to date the inscription RIB 91 before the rule of Vespasian and as he did not spring from a line of deified emperors, the inscription might be datable to the reign of Titus and therefore the governorship of Agricola. In view of all this one might conclude that there was some special bond between Cogidubnus and the Flavians, which had been forged, perhaps during the invasion itself, but within the context of a devoted loyalty to Rome which Claudius saw fit to recognize, in a way which might appeal to one who was both a scholarly student of the constitution and occasionally eccentric. The date of his death is also unknown; but it might be that the appointment of a legatus iuridicus about the time of the governorship of Agricola might be connected with it. Clearly the client kingship did not continue. The territories were divided up into civitates, on the customary Roman model. This work combined with the administrative and judicial work which was necessary while the governor was campaigning in the North might seem a reasonable justification for the appointment, together with the stated policy of Agricola to "civilianize" and "Romanize" the province. But this is to anticipate events. Gallus was succeeded by Veranius who is mentioned in the Agricola merely as a name of the governor who succeeded Gallus and thus Tacitus proceeds to Suetonius Paullinus who was to use the talents of young Agricola. The Annals contain little more about Veranius, since he died in office within a year. Tacitus seems to have underestimated the role of flattery in seeking to preserve the family fortune from the grasping hands of Nero. However, there is some significance in another part of his will, in which he stated that had he been spared for another two years he would have presented the emperor with the province. The phrase 'two years' was to be taken up later in the governorship of Paullinus, but when added to the one year during which Veranius was in office it means that during the normal period of a governorship he expected to carry out his assignment.

Tacitus comments that during that short tenure of office he merely harried the Silures with a few raids of no great significance. Perhaps when a man brings no results to fruition there is a tendency to underestimate him, especially if history is conceived of as consisting of innumerable biographies. Nevertheless,^a little investigation will show that neither Veranius nor the statement made in his will were without importance for the province.

First of all he was a man of capacity who had behind him a distinguished career.⁽¹⁹⁾ Tiberius had selected him for responsible work at the first opportunity and Claudius had accepted this estimate of his abilities. There is part of an inscription surviving in Rome on which it is stated that Veranius did not seek the post of governor of Britain (as Gallus had

sought for a province). Thus we may assume that Nero and his ministers had selected Veranius. This decision could well be associated with the policy decisions about the province which the unsatisfactory position in the island had made necessary. To this time may be placed the observation of Suetonius that Nero had once considered abandoning the province but then thought better of it. If the Romans were to stay in Britain, under what conditions were they to remain? What was the policy to be written into the mandata of the new governor, whom the government thought was the right man to carry them out? Britain was to be held, not evacuated; and not merely held, but brought more completely under Roman control; and the first step required was the elimination of the running sore on the western frontier. If Veranius was campaigning against the Silures within a year of his appointment, we need not doubt that he was putting his instructions into effect. In his will he told the emperor that he could have done it within the normal time span of a governorship if only he could have lived. We should be wary of thinking that the phrase about handing over the province meant the conquest of the whole island. At first sight it seems to indicate that the province was in revolt and needed subjugation; but this, as we know, was not the case. Gallus had been dealing with the Silures, Veranius followed him but Paullinus proceeded against the Ordovices. The aim seems to be clear: the conquest and occupation of the western highlands (modern Wales). The revolt of Boudicca forced its suspension a little later but not its abandonment. It was, however, to be "a close run thing".

4.3. CRISIS IN BRITAIN

Veranius was replaced by Suetonius Paullinus. The treatment of his governorship in the Agricola (c.16.) is somewhat longer than that which is usually accorded to one of the predecessors of Agricola; possibly because, under him, the hero of the book commenced his military apprenticeship. As the Annals make clear (14.29.), Paullinus was a general of considerable military distinction; one who had marched his troops across the Atlas Mountains of North Africa, in Mauretania, to seize his enemy's area of corn supplies. A tactic which he was to employ in Britain against the Silures and the Ordovices.

The Annals might be read in such a way as to conclude that Paullinus made an immediate attack upon Anglesey. The Agricola, however, clearly implies that he did so only after two good years of campaigning. Here Tacitus has picked up the lament of Veranius in Annals 14.29. that had he been spared for two years more he would have settled the province. Paullinus got these two years and after them faced not peace but an unprecedented rebellion. The dating of events in the Roman world is not without difficulty and the actual chronology of Boudicca's rebellion is one

of them. Tacitus does not give enough information to be precise. Scholars can make an intelligent guess. The generally agreed date is 60.(20) However, it is more important for our purpose to grasp the sequence of events, rather than their chronology. The distinction between chronos and kairos made by theologians is a useful one, of service in such matters for it points to the significance of events in relation to each/^{other} rather than to the supposed significance of them located precisely in clock time.(21)

There is some evidence available which can make us consider afresh the balance of the story presented by Tacitus. Our previous interpretation of the governorship of Veranius was held to indicate that a clear decision had been made by the central government to settle the problems posed by the tribes of western hills once and for all by a policy of annexation. This meant the final subjugation of the Silures and Ordovices. The culmination of the thrust, which this entailed, was the assault upon Anglesey. Tacitus states that this was a centre of refuge for all those who had taken refuge from Rome. Webster argues a strong case for regarding the island as the ideological base of anti-Romanism.(22) He sees behind the resistance of Caratacus and the various tribes associated with him a concerted and consistent opposition to the Romans. While we are unable to accept this argument in full, archaeology has clearly shown that extensive offerings were made at shrines and sacred places on the island which appear to have come from various parts of the mainland. From this we might infer that it was an area of cultic importance.(23) Again the description of the reception given to the Romans when they made their assault upon Anglesey draws attention to the place of the Druids on it. Whether the black-robed women had any place in the cult is, perhaps, doubtful but the next phrase is emphatic: "Close by stood Druids, raising their hands to heaven and screaming dreadful woes".(Annals 14.30.) There is no reason to doubt this particular role; but defending a sacred area was quite different from the overall direction of an anti-Roman policy, sustained over two decades through a coordinated command structure. Certainly it seems to be at variance with Roman perceptions of the nature of British opposition. What struck them was the piecemeal nature of resistance. For lack of unity they were picked off one by one. A rather different argument has been adduced by Richmond, who having drawn attention to the tactics of Paullinus in Mauretania suggested that he planned an operation of the same kind in North West Wales.(24) The enemy was to be subjugated by a long march at the end of which his source of food and reinforcements was to be destroyed. Anglesey was the base for the Ordovices. Paullinus marched on it. However, military historians

might ask whether any one campaign can be taken as the replica of another. Furthermore, does an army march through miles of hostile territory and ignore the enemy? Unfortunately we cannot reconstruct the military appreciation, which Paullinus made, of the position. Nor can we re-enact his tactics; but his overall strategy seems clear enough. The Ordovices were to be conquered once and for all and that meant marching to the very limits of their domain.

The Annals describe the preparation for the attack, the actual assault and its success. Attention is drawn to the destruction of the Druidic sacred groves. The rebellion of Boudicca follows on immediately, being explained directly as the result of plundering by Roman officials carrying out the will of the dead king of the Iceni. Their client status came to an end. With them rose the Trinovantes, who, though they may once have looked upon the Romans as their friends, now bitterly resented the presence of a Roman colony in their midst. The presentation in the Agricola is rather different. The attitude of the Britons is conveyed by means of a soliloquy. But both presentations emphasise that there had been bad conduct by the Roman officials. They draw attention to a history of exploitation. The Agricola, however, specifies the general motives which the Britons had for fighting, even harking back to the days of Julius Caesar. We should be prudent if we were to take this as a rhetorical construct from the pen of Tacitus who imagines how he would have felt had he been British. The Agricola and the Annals both assert that Britain as a whole rose in rebellion and not just the two tribes upon whom interest was focused.(25) The offence offered by the presence of the Roman colony is mentioned as well as the bad behaviour of the colonists themselves. Both accounts draw attention to the brutality of the British towards their prisoners, though it is to Dio Cassius that we must look for the gruesome details. Tacitus, with his customary disdain of the sordid, eschews them. As one might expect, the account in the Agricola is more generalized than in the Annals, but it contains the valuable statement that unless Paullinus had acted speedily the whole province would have been lost. The gravity of the position is explicitly referred to, whereas in the Annals, with its concentration upon particulars, the reader is left to infer the precariousness of the position. In neither account is there any reference to the role of Agricola himself. This is not surprising. He was far too junior to exercise any independent command. Everything is concentrated upon the generalship of Paullinus himself. However, Tacitus does draw attention to the general lessons which accrued to Agricola from this experience.(c.5. Agricola.)

The general pattern of the Roman reaction seems clear. Dio Cassius tells us that Paullinus set sail from Anglesey. Webster infers from this that

he proceeded to Chester and galloped post-haste to the South East. "He would have felt the urgent need to see for himself the extent and nature of the revolt." "He would have alerted all the units he passed along the road and arranged for supplies for his army which was following on foot at a steady twenty miles a day slog." (26) He reached London before the Britons. Because he suffered from an inferiority of numbers he evacuated it. This is taken to mean that he did not yet have the army with him and thus a speedy and courageous action was required. It is then assumed that he retreated north westwards presumably because it is inferred that he was now moving back to meet his oncoming army and because the Annals in a single sentence tells us that Verulamium suffered the same fate as London. This is written after the withdrawal from London has been described. The argument then continues by stating that the critical battle which subsequently took place was located in the midlands because this was the direction in which both general and army were moving. A rendez-vous somewhere in that region would be the most convenient place to meet and also receive reinforcements from the IIInd Legion based on Exeter. This plan was marred by the refusal of the officer in command to move. Since he was praefectus castrorum, the number three in the legionary command structure, it can be argued that the legate and his deputy must have been with Paullinus and therefore commanding vexillations of IIInd Legion in the Anglesey campaign. (27)

Frere deals with the rebellion in shorter compass than Webster but has Paullinus speeding south with his cavalry, while the infantry follow. The praefectus castrorum of IIInd Legion is said to have found the responsibility of obeying the governor's orders too much for him. Richmond summarises the literary evidence in much the same way. R.G. Collingwood does not commit himself, in any way, about the site of the last battle. (28)

Within the compass of this account we meet again the old problems of dealing with the Tacitean text: the absence of any definite time scale within the annalistic presentation and the absence of any locality that can be identified with certainty. At the same time it would appear that modern writers, seeking to make vivid this episode for which - at last - there is literary evidence, easily fall into the temptation of fine writing. This is a combination of Dio Cassius with Tacitus married to their general knowledge of Roman history and archaeology. Since the latter must concentrate upon states rather than events, literary sources give the historian the opportunity to enliven the account with both movement and character. There is no other way to proceed. The result is plausible but is it history? The dictum of Mandell Creighton about the picturesque must apply here: "Where we do not know we cannot safely invent." (29) The modern historian cannot go beyond the literary and archaeological evidence. If he does then the imagination

of the ancient historian is as good as any other.

Therefore we shall do well to note what Tacitus writes and what he has omitted. In the Agricola he informs us that Paullinus came hastily to the rescue of the province. In the Annals he writes that Paullinus marched undismayed through disaffected territory to London. But Dio Cassius tells us that Paullinus having heard of the rebellion sailed from Anglesey. (LXII.7.) Some historians have preferred Dio to Tacitus here for the drama of this departure. It has conjured up the image of the hero reacting decisively and moving quickly to retrieve the position. After this his cavalry are placed alongside him, since it seems obvious that he would not travel without adequate safeguards. But this is an inference, as is the statement that he would want to see what had happened. No source states that he did go ahead with his cavalry or that he reconnoitred.

(30)

We may try another approach. What was the first information that came to Paullinus about the rebellion? He was told that there was trouble but he did not know how serious it was. While that may have been true of the first despatch, may we not assume that there was further military intelligence? As it came in would it not have been possible to build up a picture of the actual situation in the province? If he learned that IX Legion had suffered serious casualties, he could hardly assume that he was being summoned to deal with a "little local difficulty". Surely he did get to know about the legion's defeat? When IIInd Legion never responded to his orders, the position was critical. Did the praefectus castrorum acknowledge his orders and refuse to move? Or did he sit still in silence throughout the war? We must also consider the intelligence that might well have come in from other sources, which indicated that there was unrest of some kind, whether passive or active. The supply of military intelligence is as plausible a hypothesis as any of the others. We may assume that the governor was provided with despatches at various intervals. Would this not quickly disabuse him of any idea that this was a small scale problem? Tacitus indicates that Paullinus knew that he was marching through hostile territory: i.e. that the rebellion was taking place where he was and not in some other part of the island. There is enough material here to agree with Dio's observation that Paullinus would have preferred not to fight. May not his food shortages be related to this general hostility with which he was surrounded. (LXII.8) One may start to understand at this point why the governor's vengeance was to be so severe. He had inadequate forces, he stood on the defensive, his supplies were doubtful and he was surrounded by a disaffected countryside.

If, then, one can assume despatches being sent to the governor, they should have built up a picture of the rebellion for him and thus we can now ask

whether the general officer in charge would detach himself from the only significant force he had at his disposal (the troops he had marched to Anglesey) by riding many miles ahead of them in order that he might see for himself? He might well have proceeded more circumspectly. But, on the other hand, he might have dashed ahead in a manner worthy of Cerialis himself! We might then think that this kind of action was premature; even rash. Because he galloped off South the additional intelligence that came in may have been slow to find him. If he were located, on the dramatic dash theory, he could have been travelling as fast as the despatch riders. At this point, perhaps enough has been set down to indicate that the movement of Paullinus to the South could have been more deliberate than a good story would like to assume.

Next, the fall of Verulamium could have taken place either before or after the fall of London. Tacitus merely wrote that it suffered the same fate as London. Having described the pitiful evacuation of London, perhaps the one centre that his readers would recognize, he did not wish to repeat himself. The position of London in the sentence may well be related to knowledge of its location, rather than to the status of Verulamium of which readers might well have been ignorant. Here perhaps is some geographical precision that those who think Tacitus vague might appreciate. The sentence structure is related to that rather than to chronology. But if Verulamium did not fall after London that might weaken the argument for considering that Paullinus was moving North West to meet his infantry. Furthermore this argument assumes that the rebels were acting substantially as one army, and not as a number of marauding bands. The Annals explicitly draws attention to the general plundering and looting that took place in a great many places. Perhaps it is not out of order to say that rebellions often have a chaotic nature in which at least initially guerilla warfare takes precedence over set-piece confrontations, until the government can bring the insurrectionists into an organized conflict. Here Paullinus was able to do what the British found difficult with the Americans in the war of independence; and which the Americans could not do with the Vietcong. In order to do this Paullinus had to retreat from London. Perhaps we may attempt not to put together an alternative to the generally received tradition found in the current books on Boudicca's rebellion. It may be as plausible; it is certainly as picturesque in Creighton's definition of the term. The alternative picture is that having heard of the rebellion Paullinus moved off to deal with it. The fact that he alone is mentioned by Cassius need be taken as no more than a personification of the response. Paullinus and his army moved off from Anglesey, by degrees, to respond to the rebellion. To sail from Anglesey is merely to cross the Menai Straits. The despatches coming in made it increasingly clear that

there was a general uprising as well as a particular one among the Iceni and Trinovantes. Paullinus may not have understood why this should have been so, but Tacitus writing after the event makes it clear that there was general resentment over Roman rule. The Iceni were badly handled by the procurator's officers and the Trinovantes deeply resented the colony and the colonists in their midst. Moving forward into the South East, but not necessarily out of reach of his main army, Paullinus not only received further intelligence about the extent of the rebellion but also saw with his own eyes the state of affairs in the territories through which he passed. If the Iceni and Trinovantes were the main dissidents, he might naturally have thought that he should move towards East Anglia. On the other hand London was the administrative and commercial centre - possibly the wealthiest place in the province - and to it the erratic movement of the rebels might have been expected to tend. If London were lost then Paullinus's communications to the continent and Rome itself might well be threatened. South of the river he had the Regnenses led by the totally loyal Cogidubnus. They were, however, no fighting force equal to containing the onslaught of the rebels. He could always retreat into their territory until he could regroup or summon up reinforcements. On the other hand he could regard the area South of the Thames as safe enough so as not to require his presence in order to preserve them within the province. For the IInd Legion to join him in the South East was perhaps no more difficult than to join up with them in the midlands. The IX Legion could be ignored on either count, since until reinforcements were drafted to it the survivors had little military significance.

Thus where there are literary sources available one must beware first of conflation and then of imaginative exegesis. If we seem rather critical and indeed cautious about this it is because there is so much to learn from Biblical criticism in examining texts. We dare not be naive with the sources. Tacitus clearly wishes to convey to the reader the severity and suddenness of the rebellion. The explanation of it in the Agricola is rhetorical and must be treated as such. The explanation in the Annals is much more matter of fact. The latter is preferable to the former from the point of view of a historian and on that basis the whole episode must be so treated.

Webster maintains that Cerialis may have been authorized to act at discretion since "the probability is that his responsibility was to protect the rearward areas while the bulk of the army was in a forward position". That is not unreasonable but it is not immediately apparent how IX Legion scattered in camps in the Peterborough area (assuming that it was not stationed together in Lincoln) was protecting the rear of an army in the extreme North West of Wales. Yet, if we remember that there had been a

revolt among the Iceni some years before, we may not think it implausible that the troops were stationed nearby in case they were needed to maintain the position of the King Prasutagus. After his death, quite fortuitously, they were on hand to attempt the rescue of their beleaguered colleagues.(31) The whole of IX Legion was not mauled, Webster continues for "It was not usual in Britain at this time to have complete legions in their fortresses; the headquarters and first cohort occupied forts of 20-25 acres, with other cohorts or auxiliary units." Assuming this to be the case with IX Legion Webster also assumes that Cerialis's well-known dash applied here. "Had he been more cautious, he would have collected together a reasonable force to deal with the insurgents. Instead of this he took the men he had, some 2,000 legionaries and auxiliary cavalry and rushed down to Colchester. He probably had the first cohort and possibly two others from the Ninth Legion and a unit of 500 horsemen." The Britons had foreseen such a move and ambushed him. "One could guess it was twenty to thirty miles from Camulodunum in wooded country suitable for a surprise attack."(32) Once again this is plausible but it goes some way beyond Tacitus, as the principal literary source. One need not doubt the archaeological evidence which indicates that Roman troops were stationed in a number of camps but it does not follow that Cerialis failed to gather appropriate forces before he marched on Colchester. Tacitus does not write that part of IX Legion was sent but that the IX Legion was despatched led by the Legate. The Britons could have achieved total victory over the whole Legion. "Such infantry as it possessed were massacred, while the commander escaped to the camp with his cavalry and sheltered behind its defences."(33) If it is argued that the size of the reinforcements sent later is related to the size of the force despatched to Camulodunum, we may also plausibly argue that the number of reinforcements required was related to the casualties sustained, which is not necessarily the same thing. To have troops massacred can be a dramatic way of referring to heavy casualties, without actually meaning total annihilation.

The marriage of Tacitus, knowledge of the army, and archaeological evidence can bring the rebellion vividly to mind. The whole story moves towards its climax and within a definite location both in time and space. However, the narrative of Tacitus moves in the same fashion but without the same kind of detail and chronology. We must move back once more to a consideration of what Tacitus wished to convey to us. There are different strands. First there is the irony. Veranius had asked for two more years to succeed and it was denied him. Paullinus got two years and was faced with an unprecedented rebellion. Second, though the portrait of him is somewhat different in the Histories(34), here he is presented as the rival of Corbulo in military skill, even if the comparison might have existed only in popular

talk. He was caught in a difficult position from which he extricated himself with great skill after one legion was defeated with a heavy loss of life, and the other refused to move to his assistance. He had no reserves left on which he could fall back. There was only the force he had used for the conquest of Anglesey. There is hardly any legitimate comparison between the reduction of Armenia and Anglesey, in geographical terms. If, however, the conquest of Anglesey is seen as the summation of two years hard campaigning among the tribes of North Wales, the comparison seems more credible. Third, the gravity of the insurrection is impressed upon us. "Had not Paullinus learned of the disturbance in the province and come quickly to the rescue Britain might well have been lost."

(Agricola 16.2.) The extent of the destruction, the loss of human life and the barbarities of treatment are presented to the reader. Meanwhile we see his plans. The seriousness of the decision to evacuate London is described but in terms of a military appreciation of the position, such as one might have expected one of the virii militares to make. His numbers were too small to risk a conflict. He would move out. He had been able shortly after this to increase his strength to about 10,000 men and decided to attack. That again showed military judgement under pressure. His ability to choose his own battle field displayed skill (at least in the mind of the reader). He won a great victory. We are left to infer that generalship of a high order had saved the day.

Tacitus then moves on to the difficulties that followed the collapse of British military opposition. Though the IInd Legion appears to have joined the main field force it appears as though the army was dispersed once more, once the reinforcements from Germany had arrived, in a series of 'search and destroy operations'. Famine was endemic both from these ravages and from the Britons' neglect of agriculture. Tacitus states that because of the war they had omitted to sow their crops. "This", writes Webster, "seems unlikely for any people so dependent on agriculture, whether they won or lost".(35) It might have been argued that the plundering, final battle and subsequent military repression in fact prevented them from harvesting the crops, but when the seeds should have been sown it can be argued the rebellion had not started.

The Agricola makes no reference to the difference over policy that marked the end of the rebellion. Tacitus merely writes that the defeated Britons feared the governor on the grounds that he took the rebellion as a personal affront which he was not prepared to forgive. He terrified them in defeat. As a result, they would not surrender but maintained such hostility as they could. The war was over but they would not cease from resistance. The Annals reveals that the policy of the governor was total vengeance. But it is set alongside another perception of the requirements of the province,

which originated with the Procurator, Catus Decianus, who had been in office at the time of the rebellion and who was, at least, in some measure responsible for it, had fled. He was replaced by Gaius Julius Classicianus. Tacitus gives the impression that he was on bad terms with Paullinus before this and worked against him and the "national interests". We are told what he is reported to have said but it is not clear to whom. It might have been hard for him to speak freely to the Britons. What we may have here is the kind of policy that he advocated amongst the Roman officials: conciliation and if that seemed difficult to implement then wait until there was a change of governor. He reported to Rome that the war would never end unless there was a change of policy. Now one may readily believe that relations between the two men were strained on that account, even if there was no personal animosity before they were yoked together in Britain. Paullinus, no doubt, sent his reports to Rome. Classicianus we are told posted his, in which he advocated a policy of conciliation. The result was as might have been expected, when two parallel jurisdictions have different aims: an emissary was sent by the central government to make an independent assessment, reconcile the two officials and pacify the province which had caused Nero so much trouble. Tacitus's gorge rose at the prospect of an imperial freedman, once more, in a position superior to senators and equestrians, but we cannot help but note the effectiveness of the work of Polycritus. In effect he found for the Procurator. The army was stood down and after a suitable interval the governor brought back to Rome. Nothing is said of any rewards that were given to him for the success of his campaign, though there are some grounds for thinking that Paullinus returned to honours. It is often assumed that he left under a cloud but this in fact may be both true and untrue. His policy may have been rejected but the military success he had achieved could not be denied.

It is at least arguable that the position had developed beyond military considerations. Tacitus was to make much of Agricola's appreciation of the need for conciliation and pacification, on his entry into the province, and, further, of the need for terror followed by the offer of peace in the course of his campaigns. In fact Agricola carried on the policy advocated by Classicianus. However, these considerations seem to be subordinated, once more, to the more typical Tacitean pre-occupation with the ungenerous attitude of the princeps towards, at least, his senior servants.

An attempt has been made to show that Nero was in fact appreciative of the work of Paullinus.⁽³⁷⁾ The argument hinges primarily on the manner in which Nero reckoned his tribunician power. There is a choice between 13 October and 4 December 54. Further, account has to be taken of salutations 'awarded' to the emperor. There were two of these between 2 July 61 (datable from a diploma) and October/December 62, when the eighth period of

tribunician power came to an end. In addition, a lead tessera shows that Nero distributed a congiarium or donative in the name of Suetonius Paullinus. Therefore, the argument continues, one of the salutations must refer to the victories of Paullinus in Britain.

The drift of the argument affects the dating of the revolt of Boudicca. Granting that the diploma, already referred to, is datable to 61, one should also note that there were suffect consuls in 61. This is significant when related to the phrase of Tacitus referring to Petronius coming as governor to Britain and "qui iam consulatu abierat". The matter was noteworthy because there was something unusual about it. The colleague of Petronius as ordinarius consul did not arrive in Armenia until 62.

Why should the nature of this departure from the consulate be mentioned? had Petronius followed the same course as his colleague there would have been no point in mentioning the subject. The problem of getting a solution in Britain explains the phrase. He was sent there quickly. Therefore the rebellion took place in 60, and Petronius arrived in Britain some time in 61. There are almost too many events to fit into 61 unless the argument is accepted!

Now the argument reverts to the later time. The eighth salutation of Nero could not have been proclaimed in ignorance of the suppression of the British rebellion. A complete victory had been won. The salutation could, then, have been associated with either the victorious campaign against Boudicca or in recognition of all the victories sustained in Britain, during the entire period of Paullinus's governorship. The salutation could still have taken place after the hostile report of Classicianus, the observations of Polycritus and the appointment of Petronius. If this is the case, then the Tacitean text needs to be supplemented. The donative may have been issued after Paullinus returned to Rome. This would explain why Nero waited, until after the final victory, to assume the eighth salutation, because he wanted Paullinus with him. One should bear in mind that the tessera not only had the name of Nero on it but also that of Paullinus, together with the symbols of victory. We may also note that Tacitus never refers to any public statement which might have explained the return of Paullinus. Nor does he suggest that either the reports of Classicianus or of Polycritus were made public. And, finally, he does not suggest that Paullinus could not finish the war. However, "Tacitus lends credit to this pretext to the extent of accepting that British belief in Suetonius' intransigence did prolong their resistance and yet describes Suetonius' achievement as restoring to its former obedience a province that would otherwise have been lost".(38) But this occurs in Agricola (c.16) rather than the Annals. The government could, in fact, have maintained both views. They are not contradictory. Nero could well have honoured

the general, relieved him and abandoned an aggressive policy in Britain. The first point fits in well with his sensitivity to senatorial attitudes; the second with an attempt to conceal conflicts in the high command; and the third with pressure not to lose what Claudius had achieved. Altogether it was a way of putting a brave face upon a disaster in Britain, except of course, that it did have a happy ending.

Finally one might accept that in the Agricola there could not be two heroes. Once again we must realise that the account of Britain before Agricola, in the biography, does not aim to bring before us the biographies of others who preceded Agricola but to convey the position that Agricola inherited and explain how it came about. Though a procession of names passes before us, the text is actually problem centred. If there is a deficiency, the Annals is its location. The section devoted to the rebellion ends on diminuendo rather than crescendo! The narrative falls away quickly and quietly into the removal of the governor, on some matter connected with ships. Dramatically it is effective. The reader is quieted for the commencement of the next section, after the excitement of an excellently conducted campaign, combined with the spice of conflict between high officials in the aftermath. Tacitus too has a taste for the picturesque! He does not write that Paullinus received no recognition for his work. There is merely silence. The suppression of the rebellion, the inauguration of a fresh policy and the departure of the governor close the episode.

Perhaps one might also bear in mind that by the end of the campaign Paullinus had completed the basic three year tour for a governor. The successful completion of a military campaign, that had embraced much of the province, preceded by two years more localised but successful fighting, was not an inappropriate time to relieve one who had borne the burden and heat of a very heavy day. On the other hand, the more sceptical might conclude that the phrase which informs us that he was recalled for not terminating the war could have been true in the eyes of the government. Perhaps orders were not directly disobeyed, after the army had been ordered to stand down, but it is possible to allow or encourage an army to behave provocatively even when offensive operations are not permitted. If Paullinus held his views as sharply as Classicianus adhered to his, this kind of behaviour also becomes plausible in the attempted reconstruction of events. Webster states, and perhaps rightly, that Paullinus had dedicated the province and the rebels to Mars Ultor for vengeance. (39) This action suggests a deep commitment to a certain form of behaviour by the army, and follow-up in policy. Both the governor and his troops could well have thought that they had much to avenge. They could have carried out their intentions, even if they were denied full-scale military

operations. It is at least arguable that Paullinus was too personally committed, in the conflicts in Britain, for him to initiate a fresh policy that looked for pacification and consequent development. There was a real dilemma for the government: how to change policy and demonstrate appreciation for sterling work by one who could not make the change. Nero had sufficient motive for striking the name of Paullinus along with his own upon the tesserae. Recognition for Paullinus could well have been more than a sop to sensitive senators.

The section of the Annals has been subjected to severe criticisms on military, political and literary grounds. Militarily because it is held to be vague in dating, location and sequence;(40) politically because it does not do justice to the government and literarily because evidence is suppressed. The question of the status of Tacitus as a military historian has already been dealt with. Having taken the observations into account and having read the description of the rebellion we may agree that the text presupposes an author who was familiar with the military movements and informed about the stations of the legions. One may conclude that the criticisms are not well-founded. Those who have been critical of Tacitus on this point do not seem to have taken account of the difficulty he faced in giving precise locations, which could have meaning to his readers. Anglesey is mentioned; so is London and Verulamium, too. Colchester finds a mention in the story. If the site of the final battle is obscure it may well be because it was nowhere in particular in the Roman reader's mind. There were no map references to be given. The physical lay-out of the battlefield was more important than its actual site. It cannot be said that the description of the terrain is vague. The lie of the land is directly related to the tactics employed by Paullinus and the description has been sufficiently precise for Webster to hazard an informed guess as to its location. "It is difficult, as one searches the terrain on the stretch from Wall southwards to find a place which closely fits this description by Tacitus. There is, however, a distinct possibility at Mancetter, where a ridge of old hard rock runs in a north-westerly direction converging on Watling Street near Athertstone... It is still possible to visualize a number of possible defiles which open out to the river plain through which Watling Street runs."(41)

Some historians do not consider enough the nature of insurrections. They are often disorganized, chaotic in development and expression. The central government often finds it hard to discover what is going on and the attempt to organize events in some kind of orderly sequence proves to be quite impossible. The nature of rebellions, also, causes problems for the historians who would describe them, for a coherent expression of their course presents them with grave literary problems. Tacitus opts for

giving an impression. This action fits in with what he considers will engage the attention of the reader. It is easier to convey the 'feel' of a rebellion by these means rather than by some form of narrative history. Only with considerable powers of hindsight, allied to certain preconceptions, can a sequence of events be established. Sometimes there seems to be a feeling by historians that a straightforward campaign should have been fought, with no "side-shows", so that they could present their readers with what actually happened. Unfortunately human affairs do not always operate in that fashion and Tacitus recognizes it. He should be allowed some credit for trying to convey events as he understood them. In the days of Mommsen war was a comparatively orderly business, conducted by professionals on agreed terms. Rebellions do not have that nature and neither does guerilla warfare.

The political charge rests, at least, to some degree, upon a misunderstanding of the position of the governor. We are no longer dealing with a republican type of governor, who either had or took carte blanche. Much of our analysis has accepted the possibility that there was a government policy about Britain. This is held to account for the appointment and subsequent campaigning of Veranius, to which Paullinus was heir by virtue of the untimely death of his predecessor. The legati Augusti pro praetore were not free agents to do as they wished. The importance of their mandata, received when an appointment was taken up, should never be under-emphasized, even though we have no copies of them. Nor should we forget possible mutations of policy, occurring during the course of a governorship, as a result of changes in provincial situations, as described in legatine despatches and government responses to them, correlated to the domestic politics of the capital itself, and the situations obtaining in other parts of the empire. Organizationally there must always be movement between the poles of principle and ad hoc responses. We should be in error if we assume that policy only altered with the change of governors; but we could assume that a change of governor could be made if he were either unable or unwilling to make the changes thought to be necessary by the central government. We use the fiction of a resignation in political life. The Roman and British armed forces relieved officers of their commands. They had to accept responsibility for carrying out what was thought to be necessary. It does not follow that a personal adverse judgement was made about an official who was not thought appropriate for the task. He may well turn up later in another appointment, as we see in the case of Paullinus who became one of the senior advisers of Otho during the year 69.A.D.

Tacitus does not assign external blame for the rebellion, as does Dio Cassius, with the reference to the loans called in by Seneca (42). The

whole thrust of his narrative, in both the Agricola and the Annals, seems to demonstrate that Britain was ferox provincia. Perhaps the calling in of loans supplied the spark but the fuel was ready for burning. The conduct of Roman officials, bringing a client kingdom to an end, seems, to him, to have been the principal cause of rebellion. Paullinus is not blamed for the insurrection but the role of the procurator is censured. The policy of the governor, after the final victory was achieved, was clearly a problem for both the government and Tacitus himself. The dissension to which this contributed removed the possibility of ending that section of the Annals in a blaze of glory. Within the context of policy the abilities of the retiring governor had a bitter-sweet quality about them, which could not be explained, perhaps, without distorting the proportions of the narrative. Thus, while the political criticisms of Tacitus may be diverted, the refutation of the literary critique is more difficult, because, once more he commits himself more by innuendo than by fact. Yet, as we have seen earlier, the former may leave as sharp an impression as the latter. The account closes with what appears to be an ungracious action by an unappreciative government, over some trifling naval incident. Yet it might be quite otherwise: a major policy disagreement over the treatment of Britain, made worse by some provocative military behaviour, by a force withdrawn from offensive military operations, which happened to coincide with the expiration of the governor's normal term of office. If this were so, then the end of the term offered an honourable way of escape for a government anxious to change direction but also acknowledge its debt to one who now opposed their policy. What should the historian do, since he must select as well as present? Tacitus chose to omit the dismissal honours awarded to Paullinus and drew the section to a close with a certain chord of dissonance. That we may regret morally as some falling away from telling the whole truth; but it does not detract from the value of the sources for the History of Roman Britain. Indeed it highlights a difficult problem in its history: should Britain be pacified? And if so, how should it be accomplished? Whereas at the time of the appointment of Veranius conquest seemed to be important, especially of those areas to the West, where the terrain afforded protection to the Britons, now the near disaster of Boudicca's rebellion had demonstrated the need for a different approach. The provinces as a whole must be settled and a total concentration upon the Western frontiers avoided. Both the central government and a succession of governors were to be occupied with these issues. Not until the days of Agricola would both policies come to some sort of harmony and fruition.

4.4. PACIFICATION

The government had made its intentions clear: Britain was to be pacified. The aggressive policy initiated by Nero, with the appointment of Q. Veranius, was brought to a halt. There was to be a reversion to the earlier Claudian programme of limited occupation. The arrival of Petronius Turpilianus personified the change at the highest provincial level. His seniority and the swiftness of his arrival, within a year of his consulate, demonstrate both the seriousness of the situation and the determination of the government.⁽⁴³⁾ He was not, however, the only significant official on the scene. The Procurator, Julius Classicianus, who had argued for a policy of conciliation, presumably, remained in office during this period. He was himself a Celt who had married Pacata, a daughter of Julius Indus - a leader among the Treveri - a man who in his day had quashed a rebellion of his tribe against Rome. Thus, both in himself and through his matrimonial relationships Classicianus represented a breadth of sympathetic experience greater than that of many a metropolitan Roman official. He knew the benefits of conciliation. Now his success with the central government gave him the opportunity to administer his office according to his insights.

Classicianus finds no place among the literary sources for the pacification. Tacitus in the Agricola emphasizes the role of the new governor as the reconciler in the province. Turpilianus was less inflexible towards the rebels than his distinguished predecessor, he writes, because he had not been the victim of their atrocities. As a result he did not take their insurrection personally, as Paulinus had done. His approach to government was more moderate, even milder. He dealt with the issues handed over to him. How he did so Tacitus does not tell us. The details are foreign to his purpose. It would have been enough for him that the tribes were brought back to their loyalty, the famine alleviated and the army placed in a more relaxed posture. We should not underestimate the magnitude of this achievement, even though Tacitus does not draw it out. The brevity of the reference should not disguise from us the importance of the work. (Annals 14.39. Agricola 16.3.) The absence from the Tacitean text of references to disasters, friction between officials and his usual astringent comments must indicate a reasonable degree of success, within what must have been a relatively short space of time. (Turpilianus was Curator aquarum at Rome in 63 AD.) His withdrawal after two years suggests, in itself, a satisfactory piece of work, from which a highly experienced official might safely withdraw.

Though Turpilianus does not seem to have undertaken any military expeditions, it was only to be expected that his administration should have been undramatic. He had to quieten the province. For that he deserved well

of the government. Appreciation was shown. He was Curator in 63 and received Onamenta Triumphalia in 65. His close association with the levers of power was finally shown when in 68 he was murdered as a friend of Nero. (Annals 14.29.; 15.72. Histories 1.6.37.)

Tacitus tells us that his successor, Trebellius Maximus, continued the same policy. He was not a prominent military figure, and this is not without significance, for it demonstrates the continued determination of the government to avoid further military adventures and develop the resources of the province instead. This steady movement into the paths of gentleness is obscured by the attitude of Tacitus towards the policy itself, and by the common translation of the word segnior which he applied to Maximus. (Agricola 1. 16.3.) In current translations this appears as 'deficient in energy' or 'less energetic'.(44) Grammatically the terms can hardly be faulted but segnior ought to be understood with a phrase in the same sentence: comitate quadam curandi provinciam tenuit. These words describe the style of Maximus's administration. There was indeed an element of affability in his rule, even gentleness; comitate will bear these nuances. This, too, should be taken as an expression of policy. The government had renounced severitas, for comitas. Pacification and development could hardly be achieved by a harsh, unsympathetic, punitive approach. Once the army had ceased its operations, the final submissions could be arranged in a different political climate. Thereafter a period of repose was surely needed so that crops could be tended, livestock reared and the ordinary course of commerce resumed. Peacefulness of atmosphere was a pre-requisite of success. The government had taken the first and crucial step by changing its policy towards the Britons. What was then needed was time for prosperity, morale and confidence to rise. The governor needed to prosecute a policy of positive masterly inactivity! This is what segnior should be held to mean. The word is more related to policy than it is to personality, even though the two need not be incompatible.

If this is true, then it follows that such a policy predates the rule of Agricola, which Tacitus was to emphasize later. Though the whole matter is dealt with in a dismissive manner it is nonetheless important, both for the province and for the status of Agricola. Behind the change of governors in 61 AD lay a determined policy of urbanization and socialization into Roman ways. This was continued after 63. Agricola in 77/78 was the heir to the policy not its initiator.(45) The change, however, may have been irritating to the army, which found itself playing a different, less aggressive role.

Of this policy Tacitus appears to be critical. He had far more sympathy for the "military solution". Yet it might be thought from the way in

which he has handled the material that he was not at ease with the retributive punishment handed out by Paullinus. He does not specify vitiis blandientibus (pleasant or winning vices). This is less significant than the term itself which indicates a relaxation of atmosphere, with the consequent turning away of all parties from martial pursuits. Tacitus cannot speak well of these things because at a later stage he will be presenting Agricola himself as the initiator of such a development. Yet in the passage (Agricola .c.21.) there is the same contemptuous attitude. Simple, hardy, noble people become corrupted by these practices: "the promenade, the bath, the well-appointed dinner-table". They constitute not culture but enslavement. Rome binds the spirit and induces decadence. Tacitus is inclined to toy with the concept of the 'noble savage'. Sometimes he seems to think that the adoption of culture in its various forms had, in fact, undermined the character of the Roman people themselves, who, in their concern for private pleasure, forgot the public good, and so let in the principate.

At the same time one must also notice the bellicose attitude which he evinces from time to time. Whenever there is a choice, he seems inclined to support war. But the rebellion of Boudicca caught him out. The military quality of the actions of Paullinus could not be gainsaid but war did not achieve its result even though it was crowned by success. The defeated peoples would not surrender. They feared it more than continuing in a hopeless conflict. On the other hand, with his general outlook, Tacitus could hardly welcome the alternative! In the best style of rhetoricians, caught in a trap, he covered his confusion both by complaining about the use of imperial freedmen and by denominating the peaceful pursuits characteristic of Roman society as vice. It may have been effective in salons but it was unjust to the properties of the situation. We have some indications from archaeology which enable us to see that the policy was not without success. In 66, XIV Legion was withdrawn from Britain. Thus reduced, the garrisons were rearranged. Cornwall was probably occupied at this time, so that there was no front to be maintained in the south west. Exeter could then be freed to become the tribal capital of the Dumnonii. IIInd Legion moved to Gloucester and thence to Usk. XX Legion took over at Wroxeter. The redeployment was well done for the concentration of troops facing the Welsh hills was not significantly diminished. The position was to be contained not relaxed. There is some evidence to show that a permanent fort was built at Old Burrow to watch, across the waters of the Bristol Channel, for infiltrators or worse. Furthermore, the site at Usk shows signs of being built up as a supply base for a major offensive against the resilient Silures.(46) The civil war within the body of the empire put an end to this. Offensive operations

may have been possible theoretically, but the involvement of the armies in making and unmaking emperors must have had a debilitating effect upon those who were concerned with higher policy. A governor, during such a time of troubles, could hardly avoid feeling insecure himself, since it was not easy to avoid taking up a posture towards the candidates. It was so easy to back the wrong one. He might even be a claimant himself. The legionary legates could not avoid involvement, either, if only to a lesser degree. The lower ranks might have had little perception of policy but be possessed of a keen eye for booty. Donatives from competing candidates often sounded well but payment was not sure, as Galba's troops were to find out. Loot from a successful campaign conducted by themselves brought more certain rewards to the troops.

Could the Silures, therefore, be ignored? They were still militant. Even if they had been periodically defeated, they had given Rome almost as much as they had taken. The Ordovices might, also, be restless still. However, with the death of Nero and the subsequent disturbances, Tacitus implies that Maximus pursued a policy of 'wait and see', by desisting from large scale operations. The army, however, became restless. Frere is probably right in seeing the complaint of Roscius Coelius, of XX Legion in this context. The legate alleged that the army was in a despoiled and impoverished condition. (Histories 1.60.) Furthermore, Tacitus relates, Maximus had earned the contempt of the army by his miserliness and greed. The attack can be understood as a complaint from a force frustrated of its booty since 61. The change of policy, indicated by the arrival of Turpilianus, denied the troops their full haul of plunder in the wake of the rebellion. The absence of a campaign against the Silures denied them a second time. There is nothing to suggest that Paullinus did not have the support of the senior officers and of the rank and file in his dedication of the campaign to Mars Ultor. Now he had gone and been replaced by men of a civilian style, and temperament. The aggressive treatment of the rebels had given way to softer ways. The army found that it was divorced from active duty. There could have been a problem of morale. The men needed activity to maintain it as well as discipline. The work on the Western frontier could have been just enough to keep up their spirits. The advent of the civil war and the abandonment of offensive operations might also have been enough to precipitate a crisis. Inactivity led to lawlessness. The legate of XX legion had already a feud with the governor, which ante-dated the arrival of both of them in Britain. A confused position grew worse. There were rumblings of mutiny, followed by a general loss of control. The governor had no means of asserting his authority for the implementation of his policy. The troops would not accept it freely. Recrimination followed at senior officer level. The Agricola conveys the

situation well. Everyone, we are told, remained in office but each went his own way. At least there was no bloodshed. In the end, however, the situation deteriorated to such an extent that Maximus abandoned the province and took refuge with Vitellius. The various regiments, including the auxilia and the cavalry, had gone over to Coelius, so that the governor's position, de facto as well as de jure became intolerable. Tacitus was, no doubt, correct in asserting that the dissensions between the Legate of the XX Legion and the governor prejudiced the discipline of the army. They may have been personal and of long standing as Tacitus suggests, but, at the same time, they could also embody differing views about the role of the army; differences that could have been present, in varying degrees since the suppression of Boudicca. The strained atmosphere of the civil war brought these two things to a head. In the midst of these personal and policy differences we should note that the government's policy of conciliation had started to bear fruit. Even the civil war was itself, in a way, was a blessing for the province. Since Britain was not directly involved it ensured a further period of repose for the people of the island and enabled the process of recovery which had commenced with Turpilianus to continue. The development of a new way of life required time. Such profound changes need years even for the most modest of fundamental changes to be made. The more time there was, the better were the chances of new centres of living becoming established. As the civil war went on and Vettius Bolanus arrived to replace Maximus, the new governor was able to continue (intentionally or unintentionally) the policy of quiet recovery. That it did succeed we can see both from archaeology and from the fact that many decades were to pass before warfare swept through the southern part of Britain again.

As elsewhere, the mind of the army in Britain was turned towards imperial politics. Though it constituted one of the main army groups, the troops in Britain were on the side lines. There was insufficient wealth in Britain to give it economic leverage in the power struggle and the troops were, also, too remote from the main field of struggle. Nevertheless, they constituted one of the main fighting forces of the empire, because they had been involved in almost constant fighting. Perhaps they were the most battle hardened men of the whole army. In that sense they were an asset to whomsoever they gave their allegiance. Since Maximus repaired to Vitellius, he took the opportunity afforded him of appointing another legate to the province. He might not have much control but he could prevent the influence of others becoming dominant.

How Vettius Bolanus came to be with Vitellius we do not know, but Tacitus may not have done justice to him. He makes no adverse comment upon the character of the new governor. There are not even innuendoes. To

Tacitus he was a decent man who won the affection of the troops. He was, however, too gentle for such a savage province. However, we might think that in view of the position which he inherited that Bolanus did rather well. There was a certain security and recognition of authority in the attitude of the army towards him. It was at least the first step towards the reassertion of control. We may infer that Bolanus was accepted for himself; but in the circumstances of the time - when there was no certain emperor - there was not much else which could be personified. In the absence of a central authority the acceptance of somebody because of their personal attributes is not without its value.

If in general terms an expansionist policy was unlikely in Britain because of the emergency and the previous policy of the Neronian government, it was made more certain by the withdrawal of troops from Britain, at least in 69, when XIV Legion was absent. The withdrawal was made permanent in 70. The replacement legion, II Adiutrix, did not arrive until 71.

Bolanus thus inherited a reduced force, whose numbers were not to be made up for sometime. Hence we may think, as we did with Maximus, that the words used by Tacitus of the governor, though they may be personally correct, have greater relevance in relation to policy. (Agricola 8.1.) Bolanus evidently knew the nature of the province to be ferox for when Vitellius asked for more troops in Rome he replied that he felt that Britain had never enjoyed total peace and could not be regarded as a peaceful country. (Histories.2.97.) As Tacitus suggests, he may, by then, have been doubtful of continuing his support for Vitellius, but there is not only truth in his reply but recognition of the realities of his position in the province. In these difficult circumstances he may have conducted some operations against the Brigantes. Some forts may also have been built, as Statius indicates in his poem. Even if he did nothing more than that, he demonstrated military effectiveness in the frontier area where there were long-standing problems. Since nothing further is heard of military discontent, these actions might have been enough to satisfy both officers and men. The activity also gave him a valid reason for not identifying himself further with Vitellius, whose star was commencing to fade.

During this period when the army had been restless, troops had been withdrawn, and the position of the governor weak, the troubles of Brigantia may have flared up once more. This was almost certainly the occasion upon which Venutius overthrew Cartimandua, who then appealed to the governor. His ability to respond, as we have seen already, was somewhat limited, but a force of infantry and cavalry did get through to her rescue if not to save much of the kingdom. (Histories 3.46.) The fort at Brough on Humber and the 30 acre fort at Malton may date from this time, as part

of a policy designed to turn the flank of the Brigantes, by garrisoning the territory of the Parisii, who may have feared their powerful, unstable neighbours. If so, Bolanus may be credited with using his reduced establishment to good effect, thus showing that the poet's words were neither bereft of meaning nor the mere conventional description of a good general.(47) However, the operation has to be seen as a response to a situation rather than the taking of a fresh initiative.

Overall, therefore, we must conclude that the same policy of containment which had marked the rule of his two predecessors was continued by Bolanus. Any change during this period would have been most remarkable and inherently unlikely. Rome was the problem not the British tribes. Tacitus may complain of inertia against the enemy but that was inevitable. Throughout the Agricola he maintains an offensive posture and is impatient of anything that detracts from it. Nevertheless, Tacitus was right to designate the province as ferox even if he was wrong to attribute weakness to Vettius Bolanus himself.

In some ways, from a literary point of view, the frustrations of Tacitus in the face of this policy are aggravated by the presence of Agricola himself in the province as a legionary legate. Throughout the Agricola he is presented as the fighting general but here he seems to be firmly placed in a policy cast in a different mould, but one where he was effective, as Tacitus paradoxically points out. Agricola, he tells us (Agricola 7.) passed over to the Flavian side in the civil war as soon as it was known that Vespasian was making a bid for power. Galba had used him during his short reign to conduct an enquiry into the misappropriation of temple treasure, which had taken place after the great fire of Rome. (A man of praetorian rank was suitable for such an investigation.) Galba came and went. Any chance that Agricola might have adhered to Otho was possibly extinguished by the brutal murder of his mother, to whom he was probably closely attached, and by the looting of the family estate by Othonian troops. His inheritance was thereby much reduced by this barbarism. There may also have been another factor which bound him to the Flavians: his relationship with Titus, Vespasian's eldest son. They may have met during the rebellion of Boudicca when Titus could have been sent across to Britain with the reinforcements despatched from Germany to make good the losses of the British campaign. Agricola was on the governor's staff. Only at this point does it seem as though their paths could have crossed before the events of 69. If this is so, and assuming a friendship or rapprochement between them, the immediate adherence to the cause of Vespasian is explicable. At the same time, the attitude of Domitian, the younger brother, to Agricola when he retired can also be explained. Whatever policy considerations there were, personal factors could well

have played a part. Agricola was one of his brother's men. He disliked his brother and very probably those who were his followers.

After using him to raise levies, and with the Vitellian governor still in post, Mucianus (Vespasian's agent in Rome) sent Agricola to Britain as legatus legionis of XX Legion. The fall of Vitellius, the absence of further pretenders and the arrival of Vespasian in the capital brought the civil war to an end. Order, discipline and stability were now required in both the empire as a whole and the army in particular. Agricola, however, found himself serving in a province where the authority of the governor had been sustained only by his personal attributes, rather than by his power, and commanding a unit whose previous leader had made the position of the last governor intolerable. Tacitus wrote that he arrived as successor simul et ultor. Ultor is a strong word; but Coelius does not seem to have been affected. He made the transition into the new regime very well. He became consul in 81. It is, however, a striking word. The interest of the reader is engaged. Tacitus can then follow it up with much more moderate material. The text makes clear that no punitive regime was instituted. Agricola, secure in the support of the new government, commanded troops who must have known that there was nowhere else to go and thus he simply assumed their loyalty. Tacitus admires the self-restraint of his father in law but if ever there was a time for moderatio rather than disciplina this was it. Morale needed to be restored as well as discipline if XX Legion was to be an effective fighting force. Expediency was needed as well as a sense of honour. He draws attention to the flexibility of Agricola in working with Bolanus, besides the necessary deference that ought to be accorded to a senior officer. Agricola, we are told, restrained his ardor; and this we may translate as choler as well as enthusiasm. He may well have been obliged to check his desire for revenge or punishment. Bolanus seems to have been strong enough to ensure that. In fact this conduct for which Tacitus praised him was not dissimilar to that of Bolanus for which Tacitus criticized him! In fact, what he has shown indirectly is that both men were capable of acting on the extant realities of the position in which they found themselves rather than merely by means of general principles.

If, however, Tacitus thought that the historian should have a tale to tell of stirring deeds executed by men of principle and talent, he was to have sufficient scope for his purpose in the years that followed the civil war when policy decisions were made which were to have a major effect upon Britain and his hero.

- (1) J. Wacher. The Coming of Rome. London. 1979. pp.12-17.
- (2) Wacher. op.cit. pp.21-22.
- (3) G. Webster. Boudica. London. 1979. p.53.
- (4) S. Piggott. The Druids. London. 1968. p.109.
- (5) Lecture by Dr. B. Levick entitled Claudius-Antiquarian or Revolutionary? (Society for Promotion of Roman Studies : University of Manchester. 11. November 1977.)
- (6) M. P. Charlesworth. The Lost Province. Cardiff. 1949. p.43.
- (7) R. Syme. Tacitus. Oxford. 1958. pp.394-5.
- (8) Dio Cassius. 60,19 : Suetonius Vespasian. c.4.
- (9) It seems clear that there would have been a description of the invasion in the Annals. Syme argues that the invasion lent itself to a climax: the pattern was probably:- the drama of the accession, the proclamation of Arruntius Camillus and finally the invasion itself. Thus it was shown that an insecure emperor needed to acquire military prestige. Syme op.cit. p.260.
- (10) E.B. Birley. Roman Britain and the Roman Army. Kendal. 1953. pp. 14-19.
- (11) Annals 12.36, 12.40. Histories 3.45.
- (12) Webster op.cit. p.57 seq. S.S.Frere Britannia. London. 1978. p.92.
- (13) Syme. op.cit. pp.394-5.
- (14) see below: Revolt under Boudicca.
- (15) Webster. op.cit.
- (16) Dio. Cassius. 60.19.
- (17) Webster. op.cit.
- (18) A.A. Barrett. The Career of Cogidubnus, p.227. and J.E. Bogaers King Cogidubnus : Another Reading of RIB 91, p.243. Britannia vol.X. 1979.
- (19) Birley. op.cit. pp.1-9.
- (20) The dating of the rebellion seems to turn on the date at which certain honours were conferred upon Paullinus after the insurrection and this then leads to an argument backwards that concludes that the rebellion must have taken place in 60.A.D. Therefore, Paullinus must have arrived in Britain some time in 58 or early 59. He could then have squeezed in two campaigning seasons before the rebellion occurred in the third. Or it might have occurred after the second campaign in the second: i.e. 60. Annals 14.29. dates the rebellion to 61, the consuls being Caesennius

Paetus and Petronius Turpilianus; but the latter occurs in the same year as the successor of Paullinus. From the accounts of Tacitus and Dio, the rebellion seems to have run its course in one year, so the argument is that there is too much here to be contained in 61. "It is clear that Tacitus has been guilty of an inadvertence in dating. The revolt must have begun in 60 AD." (Syme. *op. cit.* pp.275-6.) The assigning of the rebellion to this year does not seem to have caused problems elsewhere. But it might well have weakened the position of both Seneca and Burrus - especially as Dio indicates that the decision of the former to call in loans helped to precipitate the conflict. It may also have brought Paetus and Turpilianus their consulships. Both of them went on to enact new policies as consular governors.

(21) P. Tillich. The Protestant Era. London. 1951.

(22) G. Webster. Boudica. London. 1978. p.87.

(23) C. Fox. A find of the early Iron Age from Llyn Cerrig Bach, Anglesey. 1946. National Museum of Wales.

(24) I.A. Richmond. Roman Britain. London. 1st ed. 1955.

(25) Who the others were is not stated. The Romans may never have been clear about them. They could have been more suspicious than sure. However, had their old enemies the Catuvellauni or some other tribe risen in support we might have assumed that this would have been known. The Brigantes do not feature in the rebellion. Paullinus might have thought twice about his strategy had they been involved. The Silures do not seem to have stirred; nor any other of the Western tribes, though there may have been abortive risings, which could have been enough to make the praefectus castrorum of IInd. Legion prefer the safety of his camp to the hazards of the road. We may then assume that the Iceni and Trinovantes had only limited support from individuals and groups beyond their borders.

(26) Webster. *op. cit.* p.93.

(27) There is some difference of opinion here. Both Gloucester and Exeter are mentioned, by modern authors, as the site of the legionary base. The question turns on the interpretation of archaeological evidence.

(28) S.S.Frere. Britannia. rev.ed. 1978. p.106; Richmond. *op. cit.* p.32; R.G. Collingwood & J.N.L. Myres. Roman Britain and the English Settlements. Oxford. 2nd ed. 1936. p.102.

(29) M. Creighton. Historical Lectures and Addresses. London. 1903. p.102.

(30) "Paullinus would have felt then the urgent need to see for himself the extent of the Revolt ... he would have sailed by a fast galley ... to

Chester ... He would have alerted all the units he passed on the road."
Webster. *op. cit.* p.93; my italics.

(31) Webster. *op. cit.* p.90-91.

(32) Webster. *op. cit.* p.90.

(33) Webster. *op. cit.* p.91.

(34) Ref

(35) Webster. *op. cit.* p.101.

(36) M. Grant. Annals of Imperial Rome. M. Grant. London. 1956. p.321.

The actual context is not easy to understand because of a break in the manuscript.

(37) M. T. Griffin. Nero's recall of Suetonius Paullinus : Scripta Classica Israelica. co..III. 1976-77. pp.138-152.

(38) Griffin. *op. cit.*

(39) Webster. *op. cit.* p.101.

(40) Tacitus "cared nothing for and knew nothing of geography and strategy"

B.W. Henderson. Life and Principate of the Emperor Nero. London. 1903.

p.478. Tacitus was "remarkably ignorant of the actualities of warfare".

R.G. Collingwood. Idea of History. Oxford. 1946. p.39. A view at variance with the sentiments expressed in his Roman Britain and the English Settlements. *op. cit.* p.98.

(41) Webster. *op. cit.* p.97.

(42) Tacitus, one may assume, knew this story about Seneca and dismissed it.

Syme. *op. cit.* App.69. Perhaps the phrase 'decided not to use it would be better'. Tacitus may have considered it not as untrue but not the critical point. After all, as Syme points out, he had let hints fall before this.

Annals. 13.42. Syme also notes that Dio was prejudiced against Seneca.

(61.10.) The former, therefore, is not to be trusted in this matter.

(43) This is inferred from the fact that he seems to have arrived in Britain a good deal earlier than his colleague who did not arrive in his province until later. He was also replaced in Britain in 63; and time must be allowed for a reasonable period in office.

(44) Mattingly. *op. cit.* p.67. Hutton. *op. cit.* p.57.

(45) Simple rectangular houses appear as replacements for Iron Age circular huts, thus demonstrating a move towards Roman styles of housing. Stamped tiles at Silchester indicate further urbanization. The extent of this policy is likely to be masked by later developments. Ogilvie & Richmond. *op. cit.* p.202.

(46) Frere. op.cit. p.79.

(47) Birley. op .cit. p.13.

SECTION 5

BRITAIN UNDER THE FLAVIANS

- 5.1. The Brigantes.
- 5.2. Flavian Expansion.
- 5.3. Britain under Agricola.
- 5.4. The circumnavigation of Britain
- 5.5. The civilian policy of Agricola.
- 5.6. The fate of Agricola's conquests.

Footnotes.

5.1. THE BRIGANTES

The Brigantes have featured fitfully in the previous narrative. They will appear more significantly in the period now to be dealt with and this means a more careful examination of the tribe.

There is general agreement about their territorial area. It is thought to have extended from the Mersey-Humber line to perhaps a little north of the Tyne-Solway. The relief from Birrens in Dumfriesshire (RIB 2901) seems to indicate that the tribe occupied at least part of South West Scotland. The region is a large one, for any tribe to maintain a close identity. South Lancashire was a considerable area of marshland; the Pennines ran through the area like a spinal column; and the Lake District was both inaccessible and mountainous. The Eastern side of the Pennines possessed more favourable country and a better climate. We might expect from this condition that the tribe broke down into a number of sub-groups, some of which, at least, may have had their own names, like the Setantii of the Fylde (Lancashire). The Parisii are not reckoned, however, as part of Brigantia. Both their name and culture are thought to indicate a separate identity. Nonetheless, a certain caution should be exercised. It seems paradoxical that the Setantii separately attested should be regarded as part of Brigantia while the Parisii on the East are not. If the Regnenses had been created from among the Atrebatian kingdoms, the Parisii could also have been a distinct grouping which was given separate status after the Roman occupation - for the same reason: control of the native population with a system of checks and balances.

A confederation made up of clan groupings which constituted one tribe or civitas would explain certain features of their history, with which we shall have to deal. However, the acceptance of this pre-supposition is not without difficulty. How ought a tribe to be defined? What is a tribal sub-group? These are questions which a historian may ask of an anthropologist. Ethnic unity may be constituted or assumed; or there may be a sense of belonging; or there may be a dominant aristocracy which rules over different disparate clans. Such an elite may be either indigenous or foreign. In either case, they could be considered as an extended royal house. The tribe may, then, have possessed a number of chiefs who made up a tribal council over which a paramount chief presided. This supremo would be chosen periodically from among those qualified to lead. There was not likely to have been a system of hereditary right for the eldest child. Tribal opinion, especially among the chiefs, about the suitability of people to be leaders would be a more important factor. These features may explain not only the emergence of Cartimandua but also the origin of the problems she faced, for the resolution of which she called in the Romans (1).

The main centres of population seemed to lie in the lowland areas rather than in the hills. Furneaux has suggested that one meaning of the tribal name could, however, be the 'hill men'; but geography does not really support this appellation. He did suggest another meaning: the 'free men'. This title might fit in with their general attitude towards Rome and their relatively loose tribal structure.(2) If this is, indeed, the meaning of Brigantes, they might have thought of themselves as a kind of 'free Britain' beyond the rule of Rome! Were this to be the case, then one can only conclude that their imaginations were remarkably detached from the political realities amongst which they lived. However, it is possible that hill men has something to do with height and thus they might be called the high people, in the social sense: the overlords. In that case, there is a hint of their possible confederate tribal structure. Tacitus does not present the tribe in any of these ways nor does Cartimandua appear in his pages as a sort of constitutional monarch presiding over a tribal council. For him the Brigantes were a large tribe, ruled over by a Queen, both of whom required the persistent attention of Rome.

We are at some disadvantage in our studies because it seems clear that Tacitus mentioned the Brigantes and the dealings of the Romans with them in those parts of the Annals which are now lost. The surviving passages may well pre-suppose explanations which were given earlier. Furthermore our difficulties are compounded by Tacitus's own admission that he has departed from his annalistic method in his treatment of the events in Britain.

It has been inferred that the Brigantes had some kind of treaty relationship with the Romans from a very early stage. Whether Brigantia was a client kingdom is perhaps more doubtful. Tacitus never says so; though he might have done so when they were first mentioned. Even so the term might have occurred appropriately later on. Cartimandua is never referred to as a client queen; only as queen regnant. However, we should remember that any ruler who was amicus populi Romani was by definition a client, as the Romans used the term. What does seem clear is that the Roman authorities felt themselves to be under an obligation to support Cartimandua whom they regarded as a friend of Rome. After all she handed over Caratacus to them after he had fled to her after his defeat at the hands of Scapula. It was, however, against the Romans that the Brigantes rose as soon as he campaigned against the Deceangli and seemed to be reaching the Celtic Sea. The attack seems to have been a diversionary tactic aimed at keeping contact with the tribes then under attack. Whether it was a general tribal uprising seems doubtful. The Romans seem to have taken no action against Cartimandua. Hence she may not have been involved.

Perhaps it was carried out by a tribal sub-group. The few trouble makers were executed; the rest of the people were pardoned. The general style of the treatment does not suggest either a break in the alliance or a large scale attack.

Clearly, as the Roman army campaigned against the tribes of the Welsh hills, the governors had an interest in maintaining friendly relations with the tribe on the northern frontiers of the province. But this need not presuppose a client kingdom. Nor does it seem obvious why a tribe in the North of England should surrender to a military force well nigh two hundred miles away during the Claudian invasion. The notion of a treaty of friendship is a better solution, probably negotiated soon after the lines of the province had been drawn by Scapula, for then there was something approaching a common frontier. At the same time Cartimandua may well have wished to involve the Romans in her cause as part of her policy to strengthen her position among the tribal leaders. One might even ask whether she ruled effectively as queen over all the tribe? Her issue of coinage may be interpreted as an assertion that she was indeed queen regnant. Her recognition as paramount chief clinched the matter, for her if not for her opponents, who were probably local chieftains.

The Roman offensive into the North West might have rendered her position unstable. The suggestion is that refugees from the invaded areas had withdrawn northwards into Cheshire and South Lancashire. Even exiled chieftains might have been taken into the Brigantian tribal system. None of them would be well-disposed to Cartimandua's pro-Roman policy. The Brigantian attack to which Tacitus makes reference was likely to have originated among such recent immigrants. The tribe as a whole was evidently not affected nor was the position of Cartimandua. She displayed her affiliations when she handed over Caratacus. Scapula's action may well have strengthened her position within the tribe. It certainly demonstrated the strength of her ally!

Later the tribe was again torn by internal dissensions. Cartimandua was then in conflict with her husband Venutius, whom she had probably married as part of a dynastic plan to maintain both her own position and that of her family. Again she had to be rescued. The incident displays what seems to have been the precariousness of her position and also the lengths to which the provincial government was prepared to go in order to maintain her in power. They evidently knew that her opponents would be their opponents. The value of this support was displayed during Boudicca's rebellion. The Brigantes never moved. No doubt Cartimandua, like Cogidubnus, was anxious for the successful emergence of Roman supremacy from this conflict.

So far we have covered ground that has already been referred to in earlier

passages. We have attempted to fill in the relevant details in those places where the absence of the text of the Annals denies us more accurate and first-hand knowledge. We now come to events which affect the stage we have reached in the history of the province, but which, it is also clear, may not actually have taken place in 69 AD. (Annals. c.14. 29-37.) In the Histories (3.45.) Tacitus tells us that Cartimandua divorced Venutius in favour of Velllocatus. Clearly this was one more stage in the attempt to undermine Venutius and the influence he represented among the Brigantes. Velllocatus was his armour bearer which might not have been the humble post it sounds, but rather the designation of the client in chief. This might well have split the Venutian group, and convulsed the royal house. Cartimandua had to be rescued once more but it would seem as though, at the very least, she lost a substantial part of her kingdom. Venutius was largely successful. Tacitus admits that he was the ablest of the British leaders, after the capture of Caratacus; but he was persistently anti-Roman. The imperial government had a war on its hands, since it had steadily supported the defeated queen, who had now been supplanted as the de facto ruler of an unstable state. We cannot, however, be sure about the divorce's date. Tacitus may well have been running together events again, which had occurred over a long period. The divorce and the coup it implies might have taken place a considerable time before 69 AD. (Annals.12.40.) The resultant war could have dragged on if it had not been won by the year of the four emperors. The civil war prevented any large scale action, but as we have seen, Bolanus might well have been able to conduct a successful holding operation, with the rather meagre resources at his disposal. The stage was set for Petillius Cerialis and for Agricola himself, when the Flavian dynasty had established itself. As Richmond has aptly remarked, if Brigantia could have been a stable buffer state the conquest of the North might have been unnecessary; but no other dynasty caused Rome so much trouble, in Britain, and nowhere was the issue so great. Response to that situation changed the nature, character and garrisoning of the whole province.(3)

5.2. FLAVIAN EXPANSION

Before the advent of the Roman civil war the Neronian government had been faced with serious frontier problems on the West and North of the province. They were contained rather than dealt with during the rebellion of Boudicca and the subsequent policy of pacification. The Ordovices and the Silures had been defeated on more than one occasion without being thoroughly crushed or annexed. The Brigantes were particularly unstable and their queen, politically, was accident prone. None of these tribes could be considered an attractive prize from any point of view. They had little

wealth and the Brigantes, at least, subsisted on a pastoral economy. By the time of the civil war we learn that the army had become restless. It believed itself to be in a despoiled and impoverished state. (Histories 1.60.) This may well have been a comment about the loss of booty. Overall the discipline and morale of the forces had clearly suffered. This could hardly have meant anything other than a diminution of their effectiveness. Furthermore the possibility of continued dissensions, or at least mutual suspicions within and between units, as a result of the civil war, cannot be discounted. The conventional response to such military problems always seems to have been realistic manoeuvres if war was not to be had. The temptation to find a pretext for conflict is sometimes overwhelming. Better the Brigantes than a season of artificially contrived training for the improvement of military morale and fighting capacity.

However that may have been, there was now a different emperor and with him a fresh policy. Vespasian had himself been legate of the IInd Legion in Britain during the Claudian invasion. He may well have thought that Nero and his advisers were wrong to call a halt to the advance after the Boudiccan rebellion. The problem ought to be dealt with once and for all. The natives of the northern and western highlands ought to be reduced, occupied and ruled so that they would remain quiescent ever after. Such an aggressive policy did not contradict the process of Romanization that had been encouraged after the departure of Paullinus; since this was related to the more settled part of the province which needed to be pacified and developed. There such a policy had been prosecuted for virtually a decade and seemed to be bearing fruit. There had been no rebellion, for example, while the troops were preoccupied with the events of the civil war. The Midlands, South and South West might well be regarded as more secure than at any time in the past. The army could face the frontiers with a high degree of security behind it. Finally, if officers were to be appointed to senior commands who actually knew something of the troubled areas, they would themselves be quick to appreciate positions which could lead to danger. Agricola who had been on the staff of Paullinus was already in post as legate of the XX Legion. The governorship went to Petillius Cerialis, who had been Legate of IX Legion during the rebellion of Boudicca in which it had suffered heavy casualties. At first sight the references to Cerialis are wholly complimentary. He belongs to the series of great leaders who feature in the rule of the Flavians. (Agricola, c.17.) The various references in the Annals are more qualified and circumspect. The fact is that he was probably the son in law of Vespasian, through the marriage of the emperor's only daughter, Flavia Domitilla, who was, almost certainly, dead by the time these events

took place. During the civil war he had received high command partly because of his connexion with the Flavians and partly because of his not inglorious military career. Here is a hint that Tacitus did not think too highly of Cerialis but felt obliged to watch his language. The word which Tacitus seems to use in order to characterize Cerialis is temeritas, for which the English word dash would be a charitable translation. Precipitate or ill-considered actions might be the ordinary meaning of the word. Cerialis is often depicted as arriving late on the scene, suffering a set-back, lacking authority over his troops and even acting thoughtlessly. (Histories 3.78; 4.78&79; 5.15.&81&22. Annals 14.32.) He is associated with a whole vocabulary of defeat. His victories are often attributed to chance factors., The Agricola, perhaps not unnaturally, leaves the reader thinking that the successes of his campaigns were really due to Agricola (and perhaps the other legionary legates.) His successes, moreover, are not always followed up effectually. "Tacitus did not like this man. In fact he loathed him." (4) Why this should be we do not know. It may be associated, in some way, with the Q. Petillius Rufus who was consul in 83 AD. He might well have been the son of Petilius Cerialis or even Cerialis himself enjoying a third consulship. In either case, it seems clear that the family enjoyed the favour of Domitian. Thus within the Flavian party as a whole, if Agricola were associated with Titus, then Cerialis would be close to Domitian. That was enough to ensure an unsympathetic treatment. In addition, because of his previous appointment, he may well have been an adviser to Domitian during the German expedition of which Tacitus disapproved. Agricola himself might have held the same view since it deprived him of troops and detracted from the gloria won in the Caledonian campaign. Little of this comes through in the Agricola. Here all is set fair for brilliant campaigns led by great generals leading brave troops. Together they banished the native hopes for freedom. Within the overall purpose of the Agricola Cerialis is important because he was the governor under whom Agricola served as Legate of XX Legion. The governor's offensive gave the rising praetorian scope to carry forward his career. Clearly the new government had made up its mind to initiate a new policy, for it did not lie within the discretion of a governor to treat his province as a personal fief where he might act at will. The mandata were determinative. The speed with which Cerialis threw his army into the attack reflects the clarity of the government's appreciation of the position and their resultant strategy. The incautium of Cerialis gave them their energy. He went into action immediately and against the Brigantes. The XX Legion was involved in the campaign. Cerialis used Agricola at his own legatine level and then as his capacity was both proved and improved

he was moved up in the command so that he led more than a single legion. This was a particularly important aspect of 'training on the job'. Those who were, in some fashion, virī militares had to look for such opportunities of enlarging their experience, since it was essential for those who held the highest positions to know how to command a combination of units. Agricola got his chance under Cerialis to complete his military education. The description of the campaigns in the Agricola is necessarily brief. The result of them was great success, even though the nature of it is not immediately clear. Tacitus writes magnumque Brigantium partem aut victoria amplexus est aut bello. (Agricola 17.) This could be translated as 'a great part of Brigantia was embraced by victory or war'. Mattingly expresses the sense as meaning that Cerialis 'had operated if not actually triumphed over the major part of their territory'. (5) Ogilvie in the Loeb edition of the Agricolae writes 'by permanent conquest or by forays he annexed a large portion of the Brigantes'. (6) In his edition of the Agricola, with Richmond he explains the phrase as expressive of the range of Cerialis's operations. (7) Some resulted in permanent conquest which was victoria and some were merely forays which overran their territory which was bella. The distinction is between ground over which victory was gained and then consolidated by means of a military presence and territory which was covered during the course of a campaign but which was not annexed at that stage. We shall see the same sort of thing occurring during the campaigns of Agricola. If units were dropped into forts immediately ground was marched over the fire power of the army still remaining in the field could be significantly diminished. Consolidation came after the final defeat of the enemy. Then the process could be undertaken systematically and with a high degree of all round security. By the end of his governorship Cerialis had consolidated a good deal. Over the rest he had fought successfully but the military engineers had not yet done their work.

Archaeological evidence suggests that he attacked in the East and struck North West. The IX Legion had moved North to York from Lincoln probably at the command of Cerialis. (Tacitus gives no grounds for thinking that Bolanus had ordered such a move.) This might then have been the principal strike force. The XX Legion commanded by Agricola was in the North West Midlands, possibly at Wroxeter, perhaps in the process of moving to Chester. Such a change as this, however, was probably more related to the situation in Wales than it was to the planned offensive. In the subsequent campaign, therefore, the XX Legion faced two directions: North and West. The operations undertaken by Cerialis and his subordinates have left little mark on the ground so that archaeology cannot easily supplement the pages of the historian. The absence of forts datable to this period makes the

task of sketching out the operations difficult. However, we may also think that the absence of forts gives us a clue as to the nature of the campaign itself. Marching camps rather than permanent forts might well have been characteristic of it. If so then the fighting may well have been fluid and far ranging. Battles no doubt occurred but between times the army was moving fast to harry the enemy. Stanwick, a site apparently of importance in the Venutius's defence system, was successfully assaulted: an act comparable in some ways to Vespasian's attack upon Maiden Castle.(8)

The objective of Cerialis's main thrust is unknown but it looks as though it might have been Carlisle or some place beyond it. Venutius clearly had support from beyond Brigantia and this must have been located to the North of the civitas. The role of Agricola in all this eludes us, together with that of his legion. Perhaps prudence dictated that the XX Legion remained on the alert in its depot not only to protect the strike forces rear and flank but also to maintain the watch on the Welsh tribes. In the last resort the legion could also turn South. There were, after all, lessons to be learned from the dispositions made by Paulinus when he attacked Anglesey. Such a policy does not preclude either the despatch of detachments of the legion or the departure of the legate to the main army. It is not impossible for Agricola to have been on Cerialis's staff during the whole of the campaign. The relationship between him and the Legate of IX Legion cannot be known. Political factors may have been more important than military ones, in the sense that Cerialis and Agricola had been Flavians from the very start. They had nothing to prove to the new regime. They were utterly reliable. No one could have foreseen at that stage that the future lay with Domitian rather than with Titus! The outlook and affiliations of the other legionary legates are unfortunately hidden from us. However, from the remarks dropped by Tacitus we may infer, that Agricola was treated as the senior legate and acted as the deputy of Cerialis as well as his assistant. This would explain the role finally assigned to him by the governor.

While the Annals may contain disguised criticism of Cerialis, in the Agricola he is commended for his offensive spirit and for the use that he made of Agricola. His term of office was brief; no more than the usual three year term, 71-74, when he returned to Rome to take up a second consulship. (Agricola may have left with him, or about that same time.)

Important results had been achieved during his governorship. Politically the province was secure in its loyalty. The army had been revived as an efficient fighting force and a troublesome border state had been defeated within the bounds of its own lands. The next stage should have been to annexe the territory. Cerialis does not seem to achieve much of this, if

anything, though it is perhaps just possible that a fort or two was built in the southern part of Cartimandua's old dominions. Time had been against Cerialis but it was not pressing upon Frontinus. He too receives honourable mention by Tacitus: Cerialis would have surpassed any successor, had it not been Frontinus. The tribute is graceful. It may not be without significance that Frontinus was alive and an elder statesman of the empire when the Agricola was published. No historian should speak ill of the living without weighing the consequences!(9)

For some reason Frontinus did not follow up the work of Cerialis against the Brigantes. They were left awaiting a final disposal. Instead Frontinus moved against the Silures. They had been quiet for some time. Why did Frontinus turn against them? Did he activate a dormant problem? Rome was in danger of being caught once more in a war with two fronts. Had his mandata been clear or explicit in detail, Frontinus could hardly have evaded the Brigantian issue and he would have been ill-advised to stir up a quiet tribe well to the South and West of his main theatre of operations, if hostilities with the Brigantes were still continuing. But if the Silures were becoming restive for some reason, then Frontinus might trust to the drubbing given the Brigantes by Cerialis to keep them quiet long enough for him to deal with the Silures. Agricola, however, took no part in these operations. He had become governor of Aquitaine. The details of Frontinus's labours are passed over with considerable brevity. Tacitus notes approvingly that he 'surmounted not only the valour of the enemy but also the physical features of the land'.

(Agricola 17.) Archaeology has testified to his success.

New forts are found at harbours all along the South Welsh coast. IInd Legion Augusta was moved to Caerleon on the river Usk. From these sites passages could be forced more easily up the valleys. Along these roads were built and forts established with the result that each block of hills was cordoned off.(10.) However, such a massive engineering programme could not have been executed before the military defeat of the enemy. The general movement seems to have been from South to North, starting with sea borne forces making landfalls at suitable harbour points from which they fanned out to search for and then destroy the main centres and forces of opposition.

Frere comments that though Tacitus mentions only the Silures in this campaign of Frontinus, no weight can be put upon this limitation. The sketch in the Agricola merely indicates that Frontinus was fighting an enemy different from Cerialis's. The Silures were merely the best known of the mountain tribes. He argues that there can be no doubt that the Ordovices were overrun by the forces of Frontinus. XX Legion probably moved in from Wroxeter through the Severn valley to central Wales and a

new depot was started for II Legion at Chester. This was certainly uncompleted when Frontinus left Britain, as the water piping bears the date of 79 AD. Detachments of troops were certainly stationed in the territory of the Ordovices since Agricola's first act as governor was to avenge an attack upon such a military group.

The programme of annexation profoundly affected the disposition of forces to the South. Garrison were required for at least twenty forts and these had to be drawn from the parts of the province which had been conquered earlier, where the policy of Romanization and pacification was being pursued. Its success was demonstrated by the quiet which continued even after the military presence was withdrawn from a number of areas. Time and persistence had done their work. At this stage Frontinus left and was succeeded by Agricola.

The reader cannot help but be struck by the change of tone in the Agricola which occurs with the successful coup of Vespasian. First of all the emperor set in motion a policy of conquest with which Tacitus was clearly in sympathy. The objective of the empire was expansion and the purpose of a governor was to fight. Agricola, Cerialis, Frontinus and Tacitus himself were all supporters of the Flavians. It would have been offensive to patronize in writing colleagues and friends, Since some of them were still alive it might also have been imprudent as well. Furthermore as far as Frontinus was concerned it is worth remembering that he remained unemployed during the rule of Domitian and so by the standards of Tacitus his hands were cleaner than those of the writer himself! Tacitus had participated in public life and then tried to justify his own actions and those of colleagues who did likewise. But Frontinus had stepped out of public life, just as Agricola had done at the termination of his governorship.

Now the reader comes to the heart of the Agricola. Everything has been prolegomena for this period when Agricola, the ideal public servant, ruled Britain and brought to fruition all that had ever been hoped for since the days of the Claudian invasion. The details of the earlier chapters are intended to give the reader an understanding of the condition of Britain at the time Agricola arrived so that by the end of the book the magnitude of the achievement of his father in law can be truly appreciated. A warlike province, garrisoned by three legions supplemented by a numerous force of auxilia had never been properly reduced. When a province is an island the coastline constitutes its natural frontier. Such a frontier had never been attempted. Earlier campaigns had not borne the fruit that might have been expected. The successes of Cerialis and Frontinus gave Rome the chance to solve the problem of Britain. Agricola was the man to do it.

5.3. BRITAIN UNDER AGRICOLA

We are faced immediately with a problem of dating. It seems as though the arrival of Agricola could have been in either 77 or 78. There are arguments on both sides, which the Tacitean text, of itself cannot solve. However, as we have discovered earlier the sequence of events is more important than the chronology. Nonetheless we ought to try to secure a fixed check point.

in 77 the consules ordinarii were Vespasian and Titus and the consules suffecti were Domitian, Agricola himself and others. Their consulates could have been for as short a period as two months. Even with that span there was time enough to marry his daughter to Tacitus himself, be awarded a pontificate and secure his appointment as governor of Britain. As consuls entered office in January as ordinarii let us assume that Vespasian and Titus did so and continued in office during that month and February. Then let us assume that Domitian and Agricola served during March and April. Tacitus tells us, in the Agricola, that when his father in law entered upon his province it was already midsummer (media iam aestate transgressus.c.19.) The Roman summer was the period between 15 May and 15 August; so for him to arrive in Britain at midsummer meant arriving about midway during this period. Tacitus declares that statim Britanniae praepositus est (c.9. Agricola). There is an inclination to translate this as to mean that the provincial appointment followed immediately upon the completion of the consulate; but in fact the sense requires us to translate it as meaning that the appointment followed upon the marriage of his daughter. Thus if Agricola ceased to be consul on 30th April and then had to marry his daughter to Tacitus, receive his pontificate and travel to Britain, he had very little time. There seem to be rather too many events for the time available, if they were to be conducted with any dignity.

Let us examine the problem in a different fashion. If Agricola arrived in Britain during the summer of 78 then the word statim loses something of its force. It would mean that Agricola remained in Rome for a period of about 13 months if his consulship were to be as short as it often was at that time. Perhaps that might be shortened to 6 months if the wedding and the pontificate occurred during the period of the consulship. There is a choice between a period of about 22 days in 77 to hold the marriage, become a pontifex and then be on the road in time to reach Britain by mid-summer or a longer period in Rome at the end of which Agricola arrives in Britain in the mid-summer period of 78.

The year 84 saw the seventh imperial acclamation. Coins displayed in commemoration the words IMP.CAES.DIVI VESP F.DOMITIAN AUG.GERM. COS.X on

the obverse and on the reverse P.M. TRIB. POT. IMP. VII. P.P.S.C. and there was an illustration of a trooper riding down a barbarian, while another lies dead. The illustration is highly relevant to the victory at Mons Graupius which was won substantially by the Cavalry. It might then be assumed that the battle took place during the high to late summer of 84. Domitian's triumph in the Chatten war had occurred in 83. The battle of Mons Graupius then could be held to have been fought in 84. This year was the termination of the governorship of Agricola, which must then have commenced in 78.

Before finally accepting these dates, we should remind ourselves that it is not impossible for the battle to have been fought in 83, but that news of it did not reach Rome until after the victory over the Chatti.

Agricola had to wait for his share of the honours; another insult to the governor in the eyes of his son in law. Tacitus, however, does not indicate that there was a critical situation in Britain at the time of Agricola's arrival. The massacre of the troops stationed among the Ordovices was of local significance. No general uprising occurred. There is nothing to suggest that Frontinus left a situation that was seriously deteriorating which required an immediate handover. Statim

if taken in relation to the appointment has a dramatic rather than a chronological tone. It is part of the vocabulary used by Tacitus to build up the picture of the able public servant. He is a man who must be about his business, ready to answer the call, whenever it might come, even to the extent of constraining his own important private concerns. We might then ask if we can find any urgency about the position in Britain that required the departure of Agricola within a few weeks of the termination of his consulship. The evidence seems to be lacking. A long inter-regnum would not be desirable, in principle, and if Frontinus had left sometime before him Agricola might well have been urged on his way. His consulship was a token, rather in the same way as his praetorship. He was never an active official in Rome within the cursus. His work lay in the provinces. The metropolitan offices were the various levels of status that he needed to acquire before he could pass on to the next piece of provincial administration. It should have been possible to prepare for his daughter's wedding while he was consul. However, we need to remember that it is only guess work that assumes Agricola's consulship was for so short a duration as two months, and that the ordinarii served for so short a period as well. The governmental process may well have proceeded at a steady pace so that Agricola laid down the consulate later in the year, married off his daughter, had been initiated into his priestly office, and prepared himself to become governor of Britain. If statim is taken to refer to what happened after the marriage then it means that the

appointment was made after it. Events could have taken place without a rush.

Scholarly opinion is divided on this subject. Furneaux and Anderson are in favour of 77. Ogilvie and Richmond decide that the 7th acclamation and coinage are decisive and conclude that Agricola came to Britain in 78. Frere also prefers 78, and so does Burn. E. Birley also accepts this date but Mattingly holds to 77 and some years before R.G. Collingwood accepted 78 as the year of entry into the province. (11) The general opinion is, therefore, in favour of 78. The general tenor of the evidence will support it. There is no apparent reason to write a hectic half year for Agricola in 77 because the overall situation in Britain does not require it. The sense of urgency comes from the style of Tacitus in fulfilment of his literary purpose in the Agricola, where statim has something of the same force of euthus in the Gospel according to St. Mark. Nevertheless the evidence need not be interpreted in such a compressed fashion. Agricola could have done everything decently and in order and yet arrived in 77.

When Agricola did arrive the summer was more than half over. The army was not in the field but dispersed throughout the province. Clearly further campaigning was not expected. If Tacitus uses aestas both in the sense of summer and of campaigning season, then, it may be argued, by the time Agricola has taken stock of the position and made his plans the campaigning season was indeed over. Agricola had decided upon an immediate attack, but had to bring together an ad hoc force of detachments from the legions and a small number of auxiliaries, presumably from the units which were conveniently placed to take part in the campaign; speed being an important element in the campaign, before the onset of bad weather in the Welsh mountains.

The occasion for taking the field rose when the Ordovices had almost exterminated a regiment of cavalry shortly before Agricola arrived in the province. It was a humiliation rather than a serious reverse if the Ordovices had already been absorbed into the province; but, perhaps, rather more ominous if the campaign were still in progress. The dispersion of the army by mid-summer suggests that the Ordovices had been occupied unless it is argued that they did not warrant the attention of a substantial force. A good deal depends upon the translation of the word

agentem. It might mean operating, in which case the occupation was proceeding; but it could also mean stationed or encamped and this might suggest that matters had proceeded further, whether in the form of total or partial occupation of Ordovician territory we cannot tell. Both Ogilvie and Richmond (p.61.) and Furneaux and Anderson (p.84.) use the word in this latter sense. The incident is important, however, because it shows the attributes of a good governor. Promptitude and aggression are more important than social niceties. The new governor marched with his force through the land killing the inhabitants as they went. When he turned to Anglesey, not surprisingly, the islanders offered no resistance. The assault was important, however, because it displayed two further attributes of a good governor; ratio and constantia. Agricola came to the Menai Straits without any ships to make the crossing, unlike Suetonius Paullinus, on a previous occasion, so hastily had the task force been put together. Ingenuity kept up the momentum of the attack. Agricola used auxiliary cavalry to cross the Straits. (12.) Indeed the hallmark of this campaign was their physical and military excellence, as they swam, fully armed by the side of their horses and got a foot-hold on the island. It may be that they were not confronted by any serious opposition. The islanders may have been either too weak or dispirited to launch effective forays against the vulnerable troops as they came ashore. The fate of the Ordovices on the mainland may well have sapped their will to resist. The feat is nonetheless noteworthy. The real tragedy lies somewhat hidden in the text. Agricola massacred the Ordovices. His campaign in the end, was not so much a military offensive as a rigorous act of reprisal, in the course of which the tribe was virtually wiped out. Tacitus mentions this but does not play upon it. The desolation of the scene after the battle of Mons Graupius is applicable here: "everywhere was dismal silence, lonely hills, houses smoking to heaven". (Agricola c.33) The words of Calgacus are also relevant to the land of the Ordovices: "they make a desert and they call it peace". (Agricola c.30) What had been promised for the Silures was achieved for the Ordovices. No wonder, in after years, Wales seemed to cause the Romans so little trouble. There were not sufficient people to resist. They had been killed. Genocide achieves a grim pacification. In this fashion the old policy of Suetonius Paullinus was implemented. No insult to the Roman power could or would be overlooked.

Agricola had made his own policy clear. He had a mandate to advance. Those who opposed him would be ruthlessly annihilated. The Ordovices were a warning to the Brigantes. Indeed they were a signal to all British opponents of Rome who resisted annexation into the imperium. With this policy Tacitus was in agreement. His whole outlook, as we have seen, inclined him to it. He concludes that as a result of this act Agricola began to be regarded as a great man; clarus being the word applied to one of consular rank. However, Tacitus perceived that Agricola, perhaps unlike Paullinus, saw beyond retribution. Force might hold down a conquered people, but it could not accomplish much more if there were continued injustices. From this one may infer that the lessons of Boudicca's rebellion had not been lost.

Military success was not enough. A suitable provincial policy and style of administration must follow that would secure, at best, the hearts of the people, and, at the least, their passive obedience. Agricola struck his own manner which was, in effect, a reform. Though the phrases are tinged with panegyric their contents are significant. Freedmen and slaves were kept from the public in administration. The governor's staff was selected from among the competent and honourable. Personal acceptability and acquiescence in obliging suitors were not the criteria for appointments. He allowed delegation but insisted on information on the whole sweep of provincial policy. Thus he was able to overlook minor errors, since they did not spring from corrupt or incompetent acts and at the same time was able to demonstrate that serious cases would be rigorously dealt with. His endeavour, says Tacitus, was to put the efficient in post rather than spend time castigating the maladroit. Whether anybody can be so uniformly correct in the selection of subordinates is doubtful, but the administrative principles enunciated by Tacitus, on behalf of Agricola are of the greatest importance, to anyone in the service of the public. Stated as objectives they could only increase the confidence of the people in the imperial provincial administration. Whether petitioners and suitors in Rome appreciated the merits of the policy we have no means of knowing.

A number of practical reforms followed which related to the taxation system, both for grain and cash. Delivery points were made more convenient for the British deliverers. An end was made to the practice of purchasing grain in order to hand it back in tax, together with other forms of extortion which benefitted neither the natives nor the government. Tacitus does not tell us how long the administration had been so corrupt, but he makes it clear that reform was necessary and that Agricola carried out the changes immediately after the short campaign against the Ordovices. The fact that the governor turned his attention to these internal considerations at so early a stage in his rule demonstrates the acuteness of the position. The later Neronian governors had stabilised the province and begun the work of pacification but perhaps had not been able to do much more. The discontent within the army itself may have been an inhibiting factor. Certainly abuses seem to be implied during the period of the Civil War, indicated by the attitude of the legate of XX Legion and the general restlessness of the army as a whole. After the accession of Vespasian, order and discipline had to be restored as a minimum level of policy; thereafter military considerations dominated the official lives of the Flavian governors, up till this point. For the first time, perhaps, in a number of years there was a period of repose during which the internal administration could be overhauled in such a way as to forward the policy of romanization and pacification. Greater trust in the government was not only desirable but

necessary. This could only be won, not forced; to be achieved an improved quality of imperial rule was inevitable. Justice and mercy must be hall marks of such an administration. Tacitus does not deal with the matter explicitly; but the contents of c.19 and part of c.20 in the Agricola clearly indicate the problem with which Agricola had to deal. Previous governors had made the days of peace hardly less dreadful than those of war. Classicianus had been right both in his appreciation of the position and the consequent policy that was required.

When these pressing matters had been dealt with Agricola could address himself to the frontier area of the province. But before we turn to his work there we ought to note that Agricola's time would be spent substantially in the field, far away from the administrative centre of the province from which the fresh policy alone could emanate. It is one thing for a governor to order changes and make suitable appointments but another to ensure that the policy is implemented and the officials conform to the procedures laid down. Agricola could hardly do this himself, except, perhaps, for certain periods during the winter when the troops were in winter quarters. If the administration were to be consistent and fair then it needed constant supervision, especially in the area of justice. Thus it is not surprising to find at this time that a judicial official has been appointed. He could be a significant resource to a governor seeking to carry through reforms and would be able to supervise the working of the provincial judicial processes. The first recorded holder of the title Legatus iuridicus was C. Salvius Liberalis, who was probably in post during 79 (13), the time during which Agricola was carrying out his overhaul of the government service. While he was able to concentrate on the various legal codes that operated in a province and ensure that they worked correctly, he was bound to be involved by that task in the endeavour to treat the natives in a softer fashion than had been the case in the troubled years before. As he was subordinate to the governor, though appointed by the emperor, the former had an official whom he could make accountable for the implementation of the new policy and structure of administration within the province. None of this appears in the pages of Tacitus because he concentrates upon the vision and executive action of Agricola as the ideal governor. The detailed application of what has been decided does not concern him. He turns instead to the field of war. With Wales quiet after his act of retribution, Agricola faced Brigantia, in whole or in part. He could build on what Cerialis had accomplished. We shall need to attend carefully upon what Tacitus actually writes and distinguish it from the impression he manages to present. The latter is persuasive. Agricola conquered a vast tract of land; more, indeed, than any of his predecessors - either collectively or individually - but against that impression we shall have to place the explicit contents of the relevant chapters.

Season 2 : campaign of 79: In c.20 of the Agricola we read that there was a general march forward. This must have been in a northerly direction. But it was a season of surveying and consolidation. There were sudden raids, however, on a number of peoples and places. But no actual battles were fought. Brigantia was formally absorbed into the imperium Romanum without difficulty. Cerialis had worn the tribe down and perhaps occupied part of their territory, Agricola finished them off with ease. Possibly a few isolated centres of resistance had to be disposed of.

On the other hand, in view of his action against the Ordovices, his sudden raids seem to have been part of a deliberate policy of terror. Afterwards clemency was exercised and peace offered. Tacitus tells us that is what Agricola did. His policy is one mirrored exactly by Sir Charles Napier, when he occupied the Sind. Indeed his words are almost a translation of the Latin text: "The great recipe for quieting a country is a good thrashing first and great kindness afterwards; the wildest chaps are thus tamed."

(14) It is the standard formula of the "brain-washer" for gaining control over those with whom he has to deal! After the ground had been occupied forts were built and troops were stationed among the people.

Tacitus does not write in any detail. He observes that many states (multae civitates) were induced to give hostages and abandon their hostility to Rome. Indeed it could be said that nowhere else had been taken over so easily. Neighbouring peoples did not lift a finger. From the text we should distinguish the enemy (hostes) whose territory he was annexing from the many states (multae civitates) which entered into a dependent relationship with Rome, through the hostages. They are said, by Tacitus, to have been surrounded (circumdatae) by forts and garrisons. Does Tacitus mean that the tribes, who had not been conquered, were surrounded by such a Roman military presence? If he does, an odd impression had been created. Brigantia had been annexed but not garrisoned. Other states which have not been occupied have been surrounded by forts and garrisons. Is not this a military nonsense? Archaeology suggests that many forts in the North of England are Flavian in date. Is one to infer from this sentence that for the most part they had been established by Cerialis? If the answer is yes, then it follows that Agricola was annexing land already occupied and garrisoned. If the answer is no, then Agricola is the founder of many of the forts in Brigantia and the sentence in Tacitus must refer to them. However, by writing in a concise and exaggerated fashion he manages to convey the impression not only of a large tract of land being occupied but an additional area being enveloped by Rome through the fama of the general. The literary art is superb but confusing to the historian. If, in fact, the Brigantes were so broken that Agricola could ignore them, that is a tribute not to him but to the work of Cerialis in previous years.

But some time had elapsed since Cerialis had campaigned against them; enough for the bruised spirit to recover, at least in part.

Tacitus has, however, made reference to the assistance that Venutius received from tribes beyond Brigantia. There is nothing to suggest that Cerialis had dealt with them in any significant fashion. They constituted a threat to Rome, however, because they were unconquered and hostile. The day of reckoning arrived for them when a Roman force drew near to their frontiers. This time it was more an army of occupation rather than a punitive force. As they saw Brigantia taken by a steady methodical campaign so they were forced to perceive that their old position in relation to Rome must be abandoned. If they were not themselves formally occupied, it might well only be a matter of time before they lay under that threat. If Rome reached out to them, they would be well advised to agree with their adversary quickly.

All this was useful work by the governor but there was hardly much dash about it. Above all there had been no military set piece. The scenes and the drama that Tacitus thought that his readers enjoyed were almost totally absent from this year's campaign. The historian was left to make what he could of the prosaic work of occupation.

The extent of Agricola's advance during the first season is by no means clear. Multae civitates is sometimes thought to refer to the Brigantes, even though the term is in the plural not the singular.

The identification might fit, however, if the confederated nature of the Brigantian state were agreed; but at c.17. in the Agricola Tacitus had referred to the Brigantes as a civitas. Thus the implication is that there were treaty relationships with tribes to the North and West of the Brigantes: the Votadini and the Selgovae, at the least; and perhaps tribes unknown to the West in the Lake District, with the Setantii of the Fylde being regarded as independent of the Brigantes. The general point of arrival by the army, at the end of the campaigning season seems to have been the northern frontier of the Brigantes; though it is not entirely clear where that line of demarcation lay. However, somewhere along the line of the Tyne Irthing valleys might not be unreasonable. Though there might have been one or two areas forward of it. We ought not to accept too easily, however, that the Romans had regard to the tribal areas which they found. There was no reason why they should conform to them in the course of a campaigning season.

If the point of arrival is unclear, the place of departure is imprecise. Cerialis seems to have used Lincoln and then moved into the Vale of York; thereafter he appears to have veered West across Stainmore. This would then have left an area North of Wroxeter and South of Penrith relatively untouched. It may well have had no real significance, for until the days

of the Industrial Revolution it was one of the poorest and least populated areas of the British Isles. The area was also cut off from the zone to the South by the Chat Moss, an area of extensive marsh. Any movement North was further impeded by a number of West flowing rivers like the Mersey, Ribble, Lune, Kent, Duddon and Esk, to say nothing of Solway Firth itself. The region was, potentially, as difficult to traverse as the lowlands of Germania of which Tacitus gave graphic details. The army seemed to be almost water-logged! Only by a careful use of the higher ground could an advance North be made more conveniently. Unless, of course, the fleet was used. But it was on the inland hills that such human settlements, as existed, lay. The extent to which the Roman fleet was employed, at this stage is unclear. Later it would appear as a factor of some significance. Here we should give full weight to Tacitus's comment that the estuaries were thoroughly investigated during the course of the advance. It could mean that Agricola had some seaborne support vessels and that he kept his men within reach of convenient landfalls for them. The woods and forests that were also thoroughly explored had importance as centres of resistance and impediments to lines of communication. While the description of the role of Agricola may contain conventional statements about the attributes of a good general, they may also have been pointers to matters of practical significance. He led the army through difficult terrain. This inference and the emphasis upon aestuaria inclines one to think that Agricola advanced along the western side of Britain from a basis therefore possibly located at Wroxeter or Chester, then in the process of being built.

Season 3: Campaign of 80. With the Brigantes taken into the realm of empire it was now the time for their Northern allies to face the hour of trial. Some had actively given support to Venutius; some had sought to buy off Roman intervention during the previous campaigning season. Agricola made no fine distinctions. He marched and took them. By the end of the campaign he had reached the Tanaus. There seems no good reason for considering this to be any other than the R. Tay. No verbal connexion with either the Forth or the Clyde seems appropriate; while to identify it with the Tweed is to reduce the campaign to almost insignificant proportions. If it is some other river not yet identified, one can only think that the stream must have been (and will still be) unimportant. There are no rivers of any size with which the word could be associated. (15) If then the river Tay were reached, the march of the army must have continued directly North, away from the areas of Galloway and Ayrshire. That this occurred will be apparent later. But once again there were no battles! Tacitus surmises that the tribes were too overawed to resist

even though the weather was particularly bad. There was no drama in this campaign either. The skills of engineering do not often excite a dashing style. Tacitus maintains the pace of his narrative as best he can by emphasizing once more Agricola's skill in the siting of forts. If he was winning no battles, at least his garrisons were not capitulating. In addition to his ability as an engineer, he planned well as a quarter master, by provisioning each fort with supplies sufficient for a year's siege. Such a decision might be considered over cautious, unless allowance is made for the previous difficulties of campaigns in Britain and in particular for the possibility of random rebellions in territories newly occupied. The tribes were new both to conquest and direct contact with Rome. These troops did not come and go; they remained in situ permanently. There was no longer the chance of recovering during the winter what had been conceded during the summer. They were netted in a fort and road system which could be used to attack them if they displayed signs of disaffection. Tacitus must have found this material barely suitable for his purpose and style so that he had to summon up all his art in order to sustain the interest of the reader. There might also be hints which point to a certain exasperation within Agricola himself. Did he really plan such campaigns or was it forced upon him by the tactics of the enemy? It is difficult to fight against those who offer no resistance. Nor was there much scope for valour in any form of arbitrary killing which aimed to strike terror among passive tribes. Tacitus writes that Agricola did not detract from the performance of his subordinates. To the worthy he was gracious and to the undeserving he was unpleasant. Indeed, we are told, there were those who considered him to be too sharp with his tongue when he reprimanded people. Tacitus excuses the manner of the governor by writing that hurting is better than hating. When he had spoken Agricola retained no permanent resentment. Those who hand out punishment rarely do; but recipients may nurse a sense of grievance, at the way in which they have been treated. Whether Agricola was of a harsh temper we have not the means of judging. If he were the point is unlikely to be emphasized in eulogistic writing. Nonetheless the attention which Tacitus devotes to the manner of Agricola at this point, in order to excuse it, may well indicate a certain irritation in his subject on account of the nature of the campaign. The governor's dissatisfactions showed themselves in his working relationships. Could fama and gloria be acquired through campaigns as he had led?

Season 4 : Campaign of 81. The fourth season was no better. The building of forts continued. The ground over which the army had marched and on which some forts had been built was covered more thickly with fortifications.

The main construction work was well to the south of the Tay. First it was along the Forth-Clyde line, where the distances from the open seas were the shortest and the estuaries most extensive. Second there was work in hand to the South of this area. Thus the line of the Tay may not have been held. There may have been withdrawal to consolidate. The image presented to us of an enemy driven into a sort of island to the North of the Forth and Clyde rather presupposes this policy. Tacitus makes no attempt to extract any drama or inject colour into this year's marching and building. He merely comments that the Forth-Clyde would make a suitable frontier. The pressure to acquire fama and gloria could not allow Agricola such a prudent resting place. It was not only the general but the troops themselves who desired a forward push. In addition, he writes, the glory of Rome required it. Clearly a great victory with prisoners and booty was sought. Whether the central government saw the position in quite the same way we do not know. It was the year Titus died and Domitian succeeded him. We cannot assess any changes that might have been in the mind of the new princeps. The governor may have wished to press northwards and found that his mandata (presumably dating from the reign of Vespasian) allowed him to do so.

Season 5 : Campaign of 82. Chapter 24 of the Agricola begins on a more dramatic note than that on which it ends. At the beginning Agricola is described as sailing across an unnamed stretch of water in the leading vessel, (nave prima transgressus). (16) Thereafter, we are told, the army fought repeated and successful battles among tribes hitherto unknown, (ignotas ad id tempus gentes). Here at last was action stimulated by the brave leadership of a general who led from the front. However, none of the engagements is described. The interest of the reader has been roused but remains unsatisfied. Instead we are left wondering what water barrier might have been crossed.

Since it seems clear from the context and specially in the light of eamque partem Britanniae quae Hiberniam aspicit that Agricola was in South West Scotland it has sometimes been assumed that Tacitus is referring to a crossing of the Solway Firth. We should notice, however, that it is a fair translation of the text to write, he also manned with troops that part of the British coast which faces Ireland. (my italics). There are, in fact, two operations recorded in the text not one. There would be little military prowess displayed in crossing the Solway to occupy tribal land which had been, at the least, skirted before in earlier campaigns and which now lay well to the South of his subsequent campaign limits. Nor can we really maintain that the tribes of Galloway, and perhaps Ayrshire, were unknown to the Romans. They were very probably those who gave aid and comfort to Venutius in earlier days.

There is more daring, prowess and fama in sailing on the Clyde to land on its Northern bank to advance inland and along the coast. Here the tribes were unknown. Over 150 miles from the Brigantes the very distance must have tended to diminish any military assistance that might have been contemplated. Perhaps, Tacitus deliberately left the stretch of water unspecified: perhaps the original text made the point of departure clear. We may conclude that if Agricola did sail from say Maryport in Cumbria, and Tacitus knew it to be the case, he may well have been embarrassed by the fact, because it was inconsistent with the picture he was building up. Because Agricola was advancing North throughout his period of office we too easily assume that his significant military movements were always from South to North. But there is a case where first a lateralland then a Southward movement could well have taken place. If the Forth-Clyde line is held, with perhaps some outliers even further North, why should Galloway-Ayrshire be garrisoned by a daring water offensive from Maryport in Cumbria? The tactic seems odd. Overall the text will make better sense if the Clyde is taken to be the stretch of water used. The context seems to require it. Thereafter Reed's suggestion of a series of search and destroy operations along the firth and West coast during which there were battles when the troops landed is helpful.(17) The use of a land based army is not totally ruled out by this plan, but it may not have been significant since Agricola was unlikely to have moved all his fighting forces by water across the water.

On this basis we have grounds for thinking that Agricola was moving along the West coast, as he had up the East coast. The enterprise may not have been worthwhile militarily, though perhaps it was useful as an addition to knowledge of the island. Agricola would not have been the last soldier to find campaigning in the West difficult. Though the troops fought and won, the sea and the mountains were less easily defeated. Communications are difficult, other than by sea, the climate is wet and during the winter Arctic in the highlands. The battles could have been successful but unproductive. Henceforth Agricola and his successors kept well clear of the West and of the highland massif.

The exploration of these western areas continued in other forms. Tacitus wrote that Agricola also garrisoned the area facing Ireland. This does not imply conquest so much as a formal occupation by troops. Perhaps it was hardly likely that the tribes of Galloway would have been left in complete freedom as Agricola moved North towards the Forth. Now troops were stationed among them. Their winter quarters might have been there. Tacitus, however, tells us of this action by Agricola because he clearly wishes to direct our attention to Ireland. It could be seen across the channel. Thus a season's campaign has been devoted to scouting the West

coast and assessing its importance for Rome. Agricola thought it could have been easily occupied and he had held an Irish chieftain, who had fled to him, as a possible diplomatic weapon. The idea evidently appealed to Tacitus who gives a brief description of the island and once more states its position between Britain and Spain, with the implication, perhaps, that the occupation of these three lands would enclose another ocean for Rome and make her rule universal. The dream was never realised. Ireland remained forever beyond the empire.

Season 6 : Campaign of 83. The Scottish Lowlands had now been absorbed and garrisoned. Agricola could make fresh plans. The West was unsuitable terrain. He marched East along the lowland valleys and coastal plain. In this the army worked with the fleet. Agricola feared a general movement of the highland tribes which could have cut him off from the South, even if they had stood on his front. The plan was wise. The tribes in themselves might not have been formidable but when associated with unknown and often difficult terrain the danger of defeat by some imprudent step could never be far away. For this exercise at least a part of the fleet must have been brought up the East. As it seems to have been also serving in the West, we might assume that it was divided into two operational squadrons (with a third guarding the English Channel, no doubt). The tactic was relatively unusual and Agricola deserves the accolade which Tacitus gives him.(18)

The tribes suffered a form of psychological shock from the use of the fleet, since they were probably unused to vessels of that size and number. That in itself might have been an effective weapon in the campaign. The advance was sufficiently threatening to provoke active resistance. Roman forts were attacked, but the impression given is one of random and sporadic raids rather than of a concerted effort. This would come later. Agricola's intelligence service could help him now but little. Both the enemy and the ground over which they were marching were unknown. Rumour took the place of fact. There were exaggerated reports about the size of the opposition and Tacitus suggests the advice was given on the desirability of retreat in relative freedom rather than under intense military pressure. Agricola was not to be deflected. On the basis of the information he had, the army was divided into three sections so that one force might aid the others and yet continue the advance. The plan seems to have worked well for when an assault was made upon IX Legion the attackers found themselves attacked, as the reinforcements from the other divisions closed in on them. However, it may be that a disaster of some magnitude had been narrowly averted. The Caledonians were able to trek away through the marshes and forests. They were evidently not discouraged.

The Roman advance had been halted. On the other hand, Tacitus indicates the general improvement in the morale of Agricola's troops. The pre-science of the governor was not to be overlooked. A march even to the farthest limits of the land could be contemplated. Things going well are to the general credit, but those which turn out badly are the responsibility of one man, Tacitus shrewdly noted.

The tension of service in northern parts seems to have proved too much for one unit. A cohort of the Usipi (from Germany) rebelled. Having killed their officers they set sail in three ships for their native land. In many ways the introduction of this material into the Agricola might be considered odd because it is relevant neither to the biography of Agricola himself nor, particularly, to the portrait of an ideal public servant. Dramatically, of course, these adventures tend to relieve the boredom of campaigns which have been marked more by surveying and building than by daring and battle. Tacitus, however, would, from time to time, introduce digressions at significant points in a work. They marked off sections and ushered in significant parts.(19)

At the same time, the incident also illustrates something of the psychological difficulty of fighting in Britain.

To many people, in those times, Britain was situated at the edge of the world. Readers of Caesar knew the difficulty he experienced in getting his troops ashore. Claudius had experienced problems at the port of embarkation; and now, hundreds of miles to the North of these incidents, a unit sent over from Germany reacted in a striking fashion. There is thus a subtle purpose in devoting a whole chapter of a brief work to this act of insurrection and daring. If men capable of such feats fled from the campaign proceeding towards the world's imagined corners, how competent was the leadership of a governor who brought an army so far so successfully. Tacitus could afford to describe the flight, which seems to contradict the point which is being made, because it may well be that the Usipi were not with the most advanced parts of the striking force but holding a position to the South and East. The clue to this is given in the phrase circumvecti Britanniam. Of course the verb could have been used loosely and mean no more than that the troops hugged the coast as they sailed South and then ventured across the Southern North Sea. On the other hand, as we have seen, the fleet had been used on the West coast, and it may well have been that it continued to be used in two squadrons in order to safeguard Roman positions on both sides of the island. If this is so then we may suggest that the Usipi were stationed somewhere along this Western coast and that they sailed either North or South to reach the North Sea in their bid to reach their homeland. In either direction the voyage was of some

magnitude, matching the feat of the classis Britannica accomplished after the battle which was to come.(20)

Season 7 : Campaign of 84. Now committed to an advance along the lowland strip of North and East Scotland Agricola reverted to the tactics he employed in his second campaign. He used the fleet and presumably the marines on board, to make random and offensive descents on a variety of places along the shore. Once again there was the devastation caused by sudden raids associated with a general panic about what might happen next. These openings were followed by the army on land moving forward in light marching order. Agricola was able, writes Tacitus, to include in his force loyal British troops which hints significantly at the success of the policy of peaceful Romanization that had been proceeding in the lands far to the South.

After the battle of the previous year and with the continued advance into Caledonian lands (21) as Agricola was approaching the fertile territory of the Moray Firth, the Caledonian food centre, a battle was highly likely. The resulting battle at Mons Graupius is the climax of the governorship of Agricola and the emotional peak of the Agricola itself. As with so many literary judgements this is subjective but the reader will note the way that as the history of Roman Britain builds up to the governorship of Agricola, so in turn his years of campaigning rise to this peak and thereafter his life declines into more placid times during which the ingratitude of princes brings the book to an end upon a somewhat discordant note.

The battle is to be located mentally at the limits of the British shore, perched on the edge of the world. The speech written by Tacitus and put into the mouth of Calgacus makes this clear. "Now the uttermost parts of Britain lie exposed ... There are no more tribes to come; nothing but sea and cliffs." He speaks at the world's end on its last stretch of liberty. (Agricola.c.30.) The victorious general who personifies the might of Rome has discovered and conquered the remotest and obscurest parts of the land. Nowhere and nothing is free from the power of the imperial people. By these means the extent of the march of Agricola and the comprehensiveness of his achievements are magnified.

The speech itself is one of the best known passages of literature. In it Tacitus expresses the desire of men for liberty and their horror of foreign rule. By inference, he criticizes the principate for the way in which it despoils the foreigners and subjugates the Roman people. The speech, however, does not add much to our knowledge of Roman Britain but a little light is thrown upon social conditions which do not often find a place in history. The conduct of victorious troops with women - members of

families - and the general behaviour of Roman officials in general, even though they were charged with winning over the hearts of the Britons to the imperium Romanum are condemned. The requisitioning of goods and men together with the heavy physical endeavour of building roads are brought before us in this superbly constructed speech. The misery of war and occupation is conveyed to us and this must be regarded as much a part of history as the outwardness of events and policies. The material is of a general kind, as is so often in the Agricolae, but stimulates the imagination of the humane. Life was not always sunnier in the provinces. At the same time Calgacus alludes to the mixed nature of the Roman commonwealth. The auxilia are not mentioned specifically but reference is made implicitly to them in the observation that the army recruited from many diverse peoples. The auxiliary forces had been important throughout the campaign and the forthcoming fight would be won by them; but Tacitus hardly ever makes mention of them. For him they were no doubt drawn from the lesser breeds beyond the law. He is concerned with the history of Roman citizens, though auxiliaries did become citizens on discharge. The speech constructed for Agricola himself reviews the progress of the campaigns and hints at the frustrations he had experienced. Both the general and the army had outdistanced their predecessors. They knew Britain from marching to occupying it. The days of rumour and hearsay were over. There had been problems of morale. "Often on the march, when you were exhausted by swamp, mountain and river, I overheard the exclamations of the bravest, 'When will the enemy be delivered to us?' 'When will they come?'" Their opponents had been elusive, having practised a retreating defence, which stretched the Roman lines of communication to a considerable length. Agricola pointed out the problems of supply. He is driven to praising them for their endurance in fording rivers and bypassing forests! While it may be rhetoric there is an element of truth in his observation that the battle was to be fought not because the Britons wanted to fight but because after six campaigns, in the North, the elusive, retreating enemy had at last been brought to the test. Tacitus thus refers obliquely to the difficulties experienced by Agricola in bringing matters to a head. How different it might have been if a decisive battle had been won during 80. The years of marching, building and surveying would have been undertaken at leisure with a greater sense of security. Agricola had not been frustrated, in the end, but it had taken him a long time to achieve his purpose. He had only managed to bring it off because he was left in office longer than any of his predecessors or successors. He is made to recognise these points when Tacitus writes in his speech, "Make an end here of your campaignings". If the battle were indecisive or the enemy slipped away there would be

more marching into the unknown land of Caledonia. A clear cut victory would round off what was begun by Claudius and his generals - on the assumption that the battle took place "at the world's edge and Nature's end." In fact there was still a good deal of Scotland left, to the North of Inverness!

There is nothing in Tacitus to give an indication of the location of Mons Graupius. Various intelligent guesses have been made. Play upon Grampian and Graupius has no doubt played its part. The line of Roman forts and marching camps has been traced North of the Tay and West of Fraserburgh. The site of the battle is often assumed to be somewhere near to the most northern and western of these camps, which gives a site remarkably near the Battle of Culloden. Bennachie is a popular choice.

(22) If this were an archaeological study the location would be important but for us it is not. Tacitus is concerned to provide us with a scene in which his hero wins a decisive battle that concludes the war to occupy Britain and places the Roman eagle on the edge of the world. There was nothing further for Agricola to do and nothing was left for his successors to accomplish. The physical site of a battle was a detail on the margin of historical concern.

The disposal of Roman troops emphasized the importance of the auxilia. Agricola had 8,000 infantry from the auxiliaries in the centre and 3,000 auxiliary cavalry divided on his wings. His legionaries were stationed in front of the camp fence (pro vallo). They were thus behind the auxilia but on open ground over which they could deploy freely should the need arise. When he saw the disposition of the enemy, who had placed their front line men on level ground and then spaced out the others up a gentle slope, which placed them higher than the Romans, Agricola spread out his line. This thinned his ranks and made control proportionately more difficult but when confronted by such superiority he thought he must safeguard himself against the possibility of being overwhelmed right across his front. His staff advised him to bring up the legionaries but he preferred to hold them in reserve. He himself dismounted and stood at the head of the auxiliary infantry. Meanwhile the Caledonians had been going through the actions which generally marked their military preliminaries. There was shouting and singing and an uncoordinated dash for the front positions. Here the war chariots were already moving round on the plain.

The Britons had short shields which were little use against the volleys of spears and javelins thrown by the Romans. However, they showed dexterity in avoiding the fusillades. In their turn they launched dense volleys of spears, eschewing, at this stage, the employment of their long swords. These exchanges, evidently, brought no advantage to the Romans so Agricola

changed his tactics, sending in six cohorts of auxiliaries (Batavians and Tungrians) for hand to hand fighting, with their sharp pointed swords. The Britons could not easily respond to this, because they required space for swinging their swords, which with sharp blades but blunt points were used for slashing rather than stabbing. They were, therefore, in more open order than the auxiliaries who could come on in close formation, using their weapons in a forward and back motion. Their greater density made it easier for them to break the British lines. In this fashion they advanced steadily through the mass of the enemy and up the hill. The Roman cavalry were now thrown in the assault. They had, it seems, been watching the war chariots, but as the battle progressed these were left driverless and thus of no military value. The cavalry came alongside the advancing infantry but found that the density of the other combatants, together with the unevenness of the ground brought them to a halt. Meanwhile the auxiliary infantry were hemmed in by their own cavalry and menaced by the random careering of the driverless war chariots. At this point, the British reserves, waiting on the top of the hill, began to move into the battle area, gradually trying to surround the tightly packed Roman troops. The force might well have been enveloped had not Agricola thrown in some cavalry which he had held in reserve should an emergency arise. The enemy's ploy was foiled as they in turn started to be surrounded by Roman troops. From that embrace they were never released. Those who stood fast were cut down. Those who broke out were hunted down. A number of them attempted to make a stand in front of the forest. They had some success in defeating the most advanced of the auxiliaries. Agricola countered the tactic by sending his lightly armed troops into the woods and following them with his cavalry, both mounted and dismounted. The Britons were flushed out and denied the security of a firm back line. Once more they were confronted by an organized attacking force. They broke, fleeing in small groups as they could, being saved, at last, by distance and the night. The Britons lost 10,000; the Romans 360. By morning the enemy had gone. The land was desolate. Militarily it could be said that they had been both defeated and yet had made their escape. At any rate they had not been completely destroyed. The significant thing was that they showed no signs of regrouping to give further battle or opposition. This was Agricola's famous victory. He marched away; took hostages from the Boresti (an otherwise unknown tribe) and ordered the fleet to circumnavigate Britain.

The direction of Agricola's march is unclear, but it would seem to have been in a generally eastern, then southerly, direction. He was not advancing further into terra incognita but conducting a leisurely withdrawal into his winter quarters. Tacitus regarded Mons Graupius as a truly

decisive victory. (Veram magnamque victoriam.) It placed Agricola above the emperor himself in terms of military capacity and effectiveness. By making this comparison Tacitus turns our interest towards imperial politics and personalities. As Agricola continued his journey South, he was recalled, handing over to his unnamed successor a peaceful and secure province. Agricola was never to be employed again. He drank the cup of peace and idleness to its dregs.

The rest of his life was spent in decent obscurity. Once or twice his name was raised as a possible adviser in later times of trouble or as a possible candidate for the governorship of either Africa or Asia, the summit of the senatorial governor's career. Nothing came of this talk. Agricola remained a private person to the end, unused, as we have seen, by an emperor "unfriendly to high qualities". Domitian may not have employed Agricola but he was not persecuted as one might have expected, from the portrait painted of him by Tacitus. Instead we find him writing that Domitian was pacified by the moderation and discretion of Agricola. If he did not invite renown, at least he did not court ruin. There is no more of the history of Roman Britain in the Agricola which is preoccupied with the injustices of public life and so presents us with "a sense of injur'd merit". The writing of Tacitus in this fashion is extremely effective and easily carries the reader along in believing that Agricola had conquered Britain and been badly treated for it. We must, therefore, retrace our steps in order to check the impression made upon us.

First Agricola had not conquered Britain. Mons Graupius, where ver it lay in North East Scotland, was not at the extremity of the island. The wedge to which Tacitus had referred earlier in the Agricola still remained beyond the reach of Rome. The area of Moray, Ross and Caithness was never to be occupied. The central and western highlands were never invested. And the West coast beyond the Clyde also remained virtually untouched. This constituted a large inhospitable area where communications were difficult except along the western coast by sea and where garrisons would inevitably be cut off from each other in a climate that was Arctic during the long winter months.

Whether these regions were worth conquering is perhaps another matter. Perhaps the Romans still hoped for further territory in expectation of finding considerable mineral wealth but there is nothing in the literature of the time to suggest that these areas of Caledonia were central to their thinking. The regions were never systematically explored, to the best of our knowledge, apart from the landfalls made by the fleet in its voyage of circumnavigation. The entire area remained terra incognita. That Agricola never intended to occupy it seems clear from the location of his forts. They stand at the foot of the glens. He placed his men in

positions where the Caledonians would have to come to him and remain confined to their highlands. He contented himself, with considerable acumen, with controlling the lines of communication in Northern Scotland. His earlier work had shown that it was not feasible to proceed up the West coast. He moved his weight to the East, gaining control first of Strathmore and then pressing his enemy in order to provoke a battle which if successful would cripple the opposition and leave Rome in secure possession of the Scottish Lowlands. Agricola had thus consolidated what Cerialis had first won during his campaigns and invested the Brigantes. He had then annexed the entire Scottish Lowlands, keeping well to the South and East of the traditional Highland Line. It was a notable achievement, even without the high rhetoric of his son in law. This rather than the battle at Mons Graupius was his achievement. The battle was a means to an end rather than an isolated exhibition of military prowess. With this work accomplished the right time to lay down his onerous command had come. Whether it qualified him for other employment is another matter. But of the magnitude of his work in Britain there is no doubt.

As we have seen earlier, geographical details are not to be expected in a work of this size and nature. Tacitus could not possibly have listed the number of military sites which Agricola established. It is to archaeology that we look for the supply of necessary detail. By its very nature archaeology finds it easier to designate a site Flavian rather than Agricolan and the fact that the troops built with wood and turf, which were replaced later by stone, makes the task of dating difficult. Nonetheless, there seems to be general agreement that a great many of the forts North of a line from Chester to Malton are Agricolan in date. And so is the road system which connects them. If Professor Ogilvie's(23) maps are accepted then we come to the conclusion that Agricola may have been responsible for the foundation of at least 93 forts during the term of his governorship. If he garrisoned them as well, as he progressed North, he must have seriously diminished his fighting strength. While it is possible that some forts were held on a care and maintenance basis after the initial campaign, a figure of at least 100,000 is reached - and if a cohort were posted to each of them then some 250,000 men were called for.(24) This is plainly ridiculous. It can only mean that though the forts were established they were not held in strength during the subsequent years. Yet if this is so, the policy stands in marked contrast to that prosecuted during the rule of earlier governors when a military presence was sustained over newly occupied zones for sometime. It may well be that the Brigantes had been so broken by Cerialis, that Agricola needed to do no more than ensure a minimum standard of occupation after the initial annexation.

While the archaeologist might not always support that, in general a compromise might be found in the suggestion that the forts were not left empty but possessed a token garrison. Unless this kind of argument is accepted it is difficult to see where Agricola found the troops to fight at Mons Graupius - not that it was a large force of auxiliaries that was involved in the battle. (Of the number of legionaries we have no knowledge.) As far as the Scottish Borders were concerned, the same policy may well have been followed, alongside the practice of taking hostages, to which Tacitus had already referred. Howsoever these forts were garrisoned the engineering and surveying capacity of both Agricola and his troops stand out. It was a remarkable achievement. The real greatness of Agricola, as a general, might seem to lie with the engineers and strategists rather than with the fighting generals. His strategic grasp was sound. His reconnaissance of the area to the North of the Clyde gave him the information he needed about an appropriate way forward. He made his thrust through Strathmore which he carefully secured and held the lowlands in a firm grip which kept the highland tribes out of them. Neither of these aspects, perhaps, attracted the imagination of Tacitus but they were of great importance in the life of the province. Tacitus does, however, draw attention to the skill of his father in law in siting forts; none of them was found to be badly sited in the subsequent years: a verdict which archaeologists have, on the whole, confirmed. The strategic planning of the northern campaigns is not highlighted in the Agricola. Tacitus tells a simpler story of how a devoted public servant sought an elusive enemy, and having found him defeated him decisively by the employment of all the military arts - including a rather unusual skill in the use of the fleet. However, nothing that Tacitus relates is really contradicted by archaeological discoveries.

Whether the position which Agricola had won could be held in the long term is another question to which we must address ourselves. The Roman frontier positions (it would be too strong to term it a limes) rested upon the Firth of Clyde and a line of forts from Dunblane to Auchinove, forming a North-West facing ellipse along the coastal strips and valleys of Eastern Scotland. The legionary fortress at Inchtuthill was the power base for these dispositions. The forts were held for a number of years, though there is some doubt about the length of time, but thereafter there was a retreat to the South. By the time the Agricola was written he could say of the Emperor and his government that no sooner had Britain been conquered than it was let slip. (perdomita Britannia et statim missa.) To that question we shall have to turn, but first we ought to note the achievement of the fleet and of the policy of Romanization.

5.4. THE CIRCUMNAVIGATION OF BRITAIN.

The command to circumnavigate Britain was given to that section of the fleet working with the land forces in Northern Scotland. In itself the command implied the knowledge that Britain was, in fact, an island. The voyage physically confirms what had already been supposed and which the mutinous voyage of the Usipi had indicated. The latter seem to have had skill enough to avoid both the troops and the fleet operating along the shore of Scotland. When Tacitus remarks that panic had already heralded the voyage of the Roman fleet, he may have meant that the report of the battle at Mons Graupius disturbed the Caledonians; but the raiding parties of the Usipi in search of food and water along the Western and Northern coasts may have had greater influence. The natives might have found it difficult to distinguish the depredations of the rebellious troops from the random terroristic raiding which Agricola had prosecuted over a number of years. We should notice that Agricola allocated sufficient forces for the purpose, (datae ad id vires). Hence, it seems to follow that the voyage had more than a geographical purpose. The flag was being shown round those regions into which Agricola would not be penetrating, reminding the defeated tribes' people of both the strength and length of the arm of Rome. The expedition and the battle confirmed the Roman position in Northern Scotland.

The geographical information was a bonus. Plutarch, in Delphi, 83/84, met Demetrius, a schoolmaster from Tarsus, who told him that he had taken part in an exploration of the Western Isles. This conversation fits in with chapter 24 of the Agricola with its description of the voyage along the West coast of Scotland. The exploratory element need not be excluded altogether; but should be subordinated to the overall military purpose. We should expect the voyage to proceed North and then West to be followed by sailing down the West Coast once more. This would fit in with the description of the sea conditions to which reference has been made already. The text of the passage is not altogether clear. Where is portus Trucculensis to which the fleet returned? Once again the text may be corrupt. What can it mean to read unde proximo Britanniae litore praelecto omnis redierat? (Agricola c.38) There are variant readings: prelecto for praelecto; and also prelecta; and omni for omnis. Part of the translation ought to be adjacent shore. But what might that mean? The general view seems to be the shore nearest to Rome, which is the English South Coast. It might be the litoral near which the army was stationed, but if so nothing much is added to the sense by the statement. The text, corrupt though it may be, nonetheless conveys an impression of a mission completed without loss. Since it is clear that an instruction

was given to sail round Britain we should conclude from the passage that duty was performed and the fleet returned to base. However, the base need not be the fleet's principal depot. Ogilvie and Richmond incline to Richborough, as the principal supply base but the military sense does not require it. If the troops were still in North East Scotland supplies brought in by sea might still be necessary and though there may not have been offensive operations with the recall of Agricola some kind of support role may well have been necessary. If the fleet is left in Richborough, the army is left in the Northern forts without any means of communications except overland through tribes which had been annexed during the previous six seasons. That might well have been risky. The fleet (or the squadron which had been serving on the East coast) might well have put in at Richborough, picked up supplies from the main depot and then sailed on to rejoin the army in the North East. If the troops were to stay in the North they would need replenishing.

If this is the general sense of the passage, then we can hardly think of portus Trucculensis being located at Ullapool in Loch Broom. What was the point of stationing a fleet at a point many miles away from the regions which had been occupied and quite isolated from any Roman troops, separated from their comrades in arms by the most formidable of the Scottish Highlands? This location places the fleet in the very area of Scotland which Agricola had decided not to occupy. Only if there were some policy of ruling over the Broch People of the Highlands and Islands would this make sense. There is no evidence of any such purpose or policy. The Ravenna cosmography mentions Iuliocenon and the Notitia Dignitatum refers to Tun(n)ocelum, as the base of cohors I Aelia Classica. That might be identified with the sites at either Moresby or Burrow Wells in Cumbria. An argument might then be constructed for a base somewhere between St. Bees Head and the Solway Firth. The translation then might read: "The fleet was accompanied by favourable weather and the whiff of success and made for the port of Tunocelum from which, after a coastal voyage of the nearer side of Britain it returned intact". Yet the troops in the North East might need various forms of support. Their main depot was at Inchtuthill, on the river Tay. Though it may not have been navigable for ships of the size of transports, nevertheless there may have been some porting facilities within easy reach of the legionary base and for the forts to the North East in Strathmore. Carpow may yet prove to be of importance in this respect. If this should prove not to be the case then Cramond on the Forth might have served the same kind of purpose. Trucculum is sometimes thought to mean stormy, even though a stormy port is almost a contradiction in terms. We should do well to remember that the wind is almost always fresh in the North East; gales are not infrequent, so that navigation, even along rivers, might well

have proved to be difficult up to some distance upstream. On these general grounds, therefore, we might provisionally locate portus Trucculensis somewhere in eastern Scotland. (25) When Tacitus's father in law laid down his command, nothing has been abandoned. The army still hold the lowlands of Scotland, together with all of northern England and the fleet was returning to its more normal duties of transport and supply. Agricola presented to the emperor a land now conquered and an undiminished resource to his successor.

5. 5. THE CIVILIAN POLICY OF AGRICOLA.

As we have seen, during his first winter in the province, Agricola set about a reform of the provincial administration. He followed this up the following winter with a policy which accelerated the romanization of Britain. Tacitus makes it clear that Agricola's first intention was to wean people away from war-like attitudes and persuade them of the virtues of peace and quiet. (Agri. 21.) Though the text is rather generalised, we can be a little more specific, by drawing on other parts of his works. First of all it seems probable that the developments would take place in the South and Midlands of the province. The West had only recently been conquered and the memories of war were still fresh. For the North fresh campaigns were planned. The policy would therefore be most probably applied East of the Fosse Way or of the Severn and South of the Ouse. Second there was a certain urgency about this policy. The campaigns in the North would be more secure if the military lines of supply and communication led back into settled loyal territory. Frere is right to say, "the extension of self-government by the establishment of new areas of local administration or civitates, was an essential preliminary to Agricola's northern campaign." (26) The procurator Julius Classicianus had seen the need for at least a more humane policy and that, in the course of time, would tend towards a more civilian life-style. Ostorius Scapula had taken the first steps by attempting to prevent people in the province from carrying arms (in accordance with the law) but this had provoked a rebellion among the Iceni. Thereafter warfare tended to dominate the (official mind' of the province. But some progress had been made as we read during Boudicca's rebellion. When Verulamium and London were attacked, Tacitus informs us that the former was

a municipium and the latter, though prosperous was not a colony. He had already referred to the colonia at Camulodunum, in his account of the rising.

In some ways the Roman Empire may be thought of as a number of self-governing local communities, grouped into provinces and the whole ruled by the emperor. There had been for a long time a policy of settling veterans in colonies placed on conquered land (or otherwise acquired). In addition the Romans were prepared to reorganize tribal units into self-governing communities, within limits, as long as the safety of the state was not impaired. For a period there were client-kingdoms of which perhaps the two best known were those of Herod in Palestine and Cogidubnus in Britain. However, the general pattern was for various kinds of local government.

The first was of a strictly roman character, with a constitution based on that of Rome itself. This was the colonia, which was a settlement of time-expired legionaries placed in a town with a territorium of countryside which was administered from it. The title of colony could be conferred as an honorary title on communities with a different origin but this award does not appear to have been made in Britain. Tacitus, indeed, emphasizes that the title had not been given to London despite its size, wealth and importance. The colony received a charter which conferred a number of rights upon it, including those of electing four annual magistrates, duoviri iuri decundo, for jurisdiction and duoviri aediles for building and finance. In addition the colony was to some extent, free from the interference of the provincial governor.

Next there was the municipium where there was a community of Roman citizens, or if not of full citizens of those who enjoyed the so-called Latin franchise. Whereas the colony was an offshoot of Rome the municipium was a community taken into the state from outside. Nonetheless it had a constitution. The quattuorviri corresponded to the two pairs of duoviri in the colony. The territorium might embrace all or part of the tribal lands. Verulamium did not rule over the entire lands of the Catuvellauni, for we know of their civitas, though it is possible that it was administered from Verulamium (rather as district and regional council offices, at the present time, may be found in the same town.) There was in both colonia and

municipium an ordo rather like a senate whose members were called decurions and they were ex-magistrates. This was the standing executive body of the town. The Augustales of the town were a college who maintained the worship of the emperor to which great importance was attached as a means of promoting the spiritual unity of the empire.

There were also smaller towns which perhaps began as a cluster of huts in the shadow of a fort. As life developed they too might acquire the forms of self-government. The place was known as a vicus and its councillors vicani. Magistrates were appointed known as magistri or vicomagistri and in addition there were two aediles. With these we are not immediately concerned. What is of importance is that Verulamium had become a municipium within two decades of the roman invasion. Even if it were never followed by other municipia, remaining unique during the occupation, nonetheless it remains an important and early illustration of a policy of romanization.

We need not assume that these settlements were accepted easily. The colony might cause particular difficulty. It was founded on land which had been seized from local people and was an obvious intrusion into the ways of the tribe nearby. Colchester, Tacitus informs, constituted such an affront to the Trinovantes. This was compounded by the bad behaviour of the veterans themselves. Together with the rough treatment of royal house of the Iceni and callin in of loans from among the aristocracy these factors helped to provoke Boudicca's rebellion. The status of the municipium and the behaviour of the inhabitants do not seem to have been specially offensive to the rebels, except that no doubt, they were regarded as traitors. At any rate Tacitus tells us nothing that might indicate provocation.

Tacitus in the Agricola (c.21.) sums up these developments in local government in a single striking phrase: he writes that the toga came into fashion. Of course that may be taken as no more than a change in the style of dress, but as this garment was symbolic of Roman virtues and government we ought to appreciate it as part of the policy of conferring distinctive local government status on towns and tribes. The status of Verulamium shows that something was being done before the arrival of Agricola and we may also infer from the description of the

governorships that followed Paullinus that it continued after the suppression of the rebellion with its punitive aftermath. Petronius Turgilianus seems to have been appointed to follow a more flexible policy. Tacitus writes that he settled outstanding problems, by which he means, one supposes, the legacy of the rebellion but that in itself means a more humane policy of pacification which in turn means forms of Roman life and practice. Trebellius Maximus, we are told, set up a mild mannered administration during which the Britons learned to indulge in pleasant vices. (Agri. 16.3.) Here we may have a clue which indicates that a coherent policy of romanization was being promoted. Whether this continued during the troubled time of the civil war we cannot know. Military problems loomed large at this period, since there was considerable unrest in the army as a whole, which was independent of the struggle for supreme power in Rome. The cause lay in Britain itself among soldiers who had become used to campaigning, with all its rewards. Their restlessness may indicate that a more civilian regime was being established, with the changes in life style that this required both among the Britons, the Roman army and the provincial infrastructure. That the policy of official encouragement continued we may infer from the inscription found at Verulamium. It does indeed mention Agricola and seems datable to 79 AD but this may indicate not only the thrust of his policy but that of Frontinus, his predecessor. If the inscription were set up when the building was completed, then it may well have been started during the governorship of Frontinus (particularly if Agricola could be shown to have entered the province in 78 AD.) By putting together these hints we may conclude that there had been a policy of romanization before Agricola took possession of his province but that it is hard to find the archaeological evidence for it at the moment. There is no literary evidence; nor is it likely that any is now going to be found. Tacitus shows that Agricola himself could see the need for a policy of pacification and romanization. If the natives were left as they had been found there would always be the threat of war. The establishment of an equitable system of taxation can also be regarded as part of the process of romanization. This was the area of life in which the rulers came into more direct contact with the ruled. Here some kind of common language was

required. This was the place where the British needed some knowledge of Latin and Roman procedures. As the provincial administration and the army had found it was also the place where grievances could and did grow. Agricola had been concerned soon after his entrance into the province to reform the administration at this point, for as Tacitus had observed, the Britons were prepared to fulfil their obligations as long as they were managed with justice. There was the levy, impositions of various kinds together with the tribute, which the reader will remember, occasioned trouble in Palestine, as we read in the Gospels. In addition to these demands for money and goods there was the annona which was a grain tax on which the army depended. It was the administration of this tax that had fed earlier grievances to which Tacitus had referred in his review of the governorships of Agricola's predecessors. (Agri. 18.) Calgacus dwelt upon these iniquities in the speech which Tacitus wrote for him and to them he added the demands of forced labour. The importance of Agricola's fort and road building programme has been mentioned but a larger labour force was necessary than the army could supply. The local tribes people were pressed into service. They bore the heat and burden of the day, while the army, no doubt, provided the more skilled and supervisory activities. (Agri. 31.)

Calgacus is also made to comment upon the social and sexual behaviour of the Romans. Hospitality was abused; wives and sisters were subjected to the lust of Roman occupiers. It would be rash to generalise about this, nonetheless we have to recognize that sexual encounters and relationships are ways in which different groups encounter each other and to that extent they may be regarded as a significant, though informal, part of the process of acculturation, and one that could easily be productive of local clashes and liaisons.

The improvements made ^{by} Agricola in the provincial administration together with a general policy of local devolution might have improved military security for the northern campaigns, but there was much else to be done before the Britons could be said to show a Roman face. A more detailed programme was needed. This Agricola supplied. He gave official patronage. He exhorted people to build, but more than that he assisted them. This must mean grant aid. The local tribes were unlikely to have the

capital necessary for such enterprises. Their economic structure did not produce that kind of wealth. They had been heavily taxed in vexatious ways so that there may not have been much of a surplus in the more developed areas and the experience of the Iceni with loans made available by such Romans as Seneca had not been a happy one. Official assistance was the best way forward. However, it was not merely a matter of money. Architects and engineers were necessary. These were not to be found among the Britons, nor is there evidence that there had been an influx of civilian professionals into the province. The design of some towns seems to indicate that the governors made army engineers and technicians available for this work. The buildings they erected on their military style ground plan were those characteristic of the Roman world: temples for religion, fora which served not only as trading places in the style of markets but were the focal point round which the official buildings of the town were grouped. (The one word conjures up the rest, rather as the word toga evokes the development of local government.) In addition houses were built. These were presumably constructed in more durable material and in a more Roman style than the natives had hitherto used. The word domos in the text will have included villas (country houses) as well as those in towns. Furneaux and Anderson point out that the remains in such towns as Caewent and Wroxeter, Silchester and Bath all indicate that romanization grew apace under the Flavians. In general we may assume a fairly comprehensive building programme for the tribal centres of the Midlands and the South but the time span of each governorship is too narrow for us to be able to date each development to a particular governor. There is no need to detract from the work of Agricola. We only need to set it in context, remembering that the literary evidence is better for him than for his predecessors and successors.

Important as this building programme may have been and critical as the political reconstitution of tribes into self-governing units was, the process of cultural change takes place in the minds and spirit of people. It takes a long time. Several generations may pass before certain fundamental attitudes are interiorized. Into this complex problem of acculturation we cannot now delve. But we should notice that there was a clear recognition of the need for an education programme. The sons

of chieftains were given a liberal education. (Their fathers being left to live out their days in the old way.) It seems clear that the spear head of this programme was Demetrius of Tarsus. He was a grammatikos or grammar school teacher who appears in Plutarch's De Defectu Oraculorum, where he seems to be en route from Britain to Tarsus in 83 AD discussing at Delphi the decay of oracles. In his discourse he mentions some of his experiences during an imperial expedition of enquiry and survey. It may well have been that he accompanied Agricola and the army and navy on the northern campaigns. He certainly was closely associated with the governor. He appears on two inscriptions at York. (RIB 662,663). One of these is dedicated to the gods of the governor's residence, so we may conclude that he lived there and held his school for the young generation there. No doubt a number of leaders picked up some Latin just by having to deal with the provincial officers and the army but this policy ensured a systematic induction into the language and its literature. Gradually the old suspicions were dropped and rhetoric became an attractive skill.

Agricola also operated a policy of "positive discrimination" by using Britons rather than Gauls. The language at this point is concise so that the meaning is not exactly clear; but it seems unlikely that the Britons were naturally better than Gauls. No doubt some people may have wished to think so; but that is partisanship. The use of Britons fitted into the overall policy. It could not be done all at once; but as opportunity offered they were used. The same sort of process was going on in the army. Britons were being recruited into the auxilia and appear in the later stages of Agricola's campaigns in the North. (Agri. 29). We cannot be sure when this training programme began. The men are said to have proved themselves during the long years of peace; which may indicate either that they had served for some time or that they were recruited from tribes with a proven record of loyalty.

The programme went deeper than politics and education. It delved into religion and life and style. Temples were built. The rites and dedications reflected the polytheism of the Roman world: Gods many and Lords many. The Gods the Romans brought assimilated the Gods of the tribe and land and vice-versa. The importance

of these cultic activities should not be underestimated. They tended to bind people together at a deep level of their existence and furthermore involved people of all social classes as well as on both sides of the political divide as rulers and the ruled. Last, but not least, religious activities claimed the attention of more people than the number of those who sat in the tribal council, spoke Latin and wore a toga. Religion is the point at which people try to find and then express meaning in life. Here it was that hearts were turned towards Rome by a policy of toleration and by the promotion of the imperial cult, with which the provincial council was closely associated.

More superficially but not the less important was the adoption of social practices which when once taken up were found to be both agreeable and fashionable. The Roman bath was more than a matter of hygiene. It was a way of leisure. Cleanliness there may have been but there was gossip and lounging, games and athletics clubbability and a beauty salon for the self-conscious. With this was closely associated the portico. This was more than a covered walk way. It was the place where the town met informally to chat and exchange news as well as the place where travelling teachers and entertainers might be found. Finally, if it is true that "a man is what he eats" then changes in diet are also significant. The meals of the mediterranean world were radically different from those of the northern lands; while the diet of the tribespeople who were fundamentally herdsmen was different from those who tilled the ground. The well appointed dinner table draws our attention to this important change. It was not only a matter of following the Roman menu and manner of serving the meal. It was also a stimulus to changes in local agriculture and horticulture since the new foods had to be grown. Where they could not, particularly in the production of olive oil and large quantities of grapes then trade with other provinces was stimulated.

By these means Britain gradually ceased to be the warlike country it had been over the first fifty years of the Roman occupation. The extent to which it was romanized has been a matter of debate for many years and the question lies beyond our present concern. Here we are to notice the way in which the process began and was continued. For this Agricola deserves much credit. But we should err if we were to recognize only him. The role of his

predecessors, whose work we have reviewed, deserves honourable mention and we must not forget those who came after. But, in the last analysis, the credit probably ought to go to the emperor and his council in Rome. They were able to formulate a policy of this kind. Doubtless the superiority of Roman ways was accepted by them without question, almost unconsciously, but they could not have constructed a policy of romanization in Britain or anywhere else if they had not been able to conceptualize their presuppositions, stand apart from them, analyse them and arrange them into an ordered programme that embraced buildings, education, army recruitment, leisure, social habits, religion and the process of government and administration themselves. What perhaps seemed important to them was not always what seemed important to the people affected or indeed to the modern scholar. The most visible contribution to the history of Britain made by Agricola was the network of roads he built, a by-product of his campaigns and construction of forts - a feat which Tacitus passes over in silence. To him and his contemporaries it probably seemed so obvious and routine that it did not warrant notice. The expert siting of forts seemed to show much greater ability. Yet much depended not only upon the forts but on the communications between them. The supplying and servicing of these forts and their road system shows an administrative genius at work. Once more the mundane was significant but it was not the kind of history that Tacitus was predisposed to write, especially when pressure of space could be urged in the cause. (27)

Agricola had opportunities in the province denied his predecessors partly because of the policy set down in his mandata but also partly because he stayed in the province longer than any of his predecessors. He had time to carry things through and was there long enough to see at least some fruit for his labours. Moreover he had the assistance of a legatus iuridicus. This official may have been concerned to arrange the absorption of the lands of Cogidubnus into the province, assuming that the king died about this time. He may also have been appointed to relieve pressure on a governor who spent much of his time campaigning. But these arguments are not entirely convincing. Other client kingdoms had been taken into the Empire without the necessity of making fundamental changes in the provincial infrastructure and other governors had been occupied with military matters

without getting an iuridicus. Since he was in post early in the governorship of Agricola it can hardly be argued that the appointment was made because the governor was over-burdened. Cerialis and Frontinus might have been sceptical about the special pleading. However, if there was a policy to romanize tribal government and give the tribal capitals their own character then there was not only a good deal of additional work to be done, but the services of a professional official on the spot were needed. When the process had gone on pragmatically and occasionally the old administrative machinery could handle it, now with much to be done in a relatively short space of time, something different was required. This appointment might well be the most important indicator of the programme of romanization and the fact that it was made during the governorship of Agricola could indicate that it was under him that the policy was most energetically and systematically applied. When he left Britain he could show that the South was moving towards self-governing civitates, that British leaders of the next generation were being educated as Latins and their subjects used in the army and in civilian administration. The tribes of Wales and the North Britain had been crushed and annexed. The Brigantian problem had at last been laid to rest. The limits of Britain had been described. What would the central government do with the opportunity which now presented itself? The answer was an intense disappointment to Tacitus.

5.6. THE FATE OF AGRICOLA'S CONQUESTS.

There is no word in the Agricola of the fate of the northern lands conquered by Agricola. Tacitus leads the reader to the retirement of his father in law and regrets the failure to use him further or find a high appointment for him commensurate with his merits. There is but one brief phrase in the Histories(I.1.): perdomita Britannia et statim omissa. To what does the phrase refer? It can hardly be a comment upon the policy of the Neronian government, even though, as we have seen, there was, perhaps, a time when the conquest hardly seemed worthwhile. Withdrawal might have been contemplated. Nor can it refer to the period of the civil war 69 AD nor to the reigns of either Vespasian or Titus. During the former period the status quo was maintained and thereafter an aggressive policy of expansion was initiated. Thus it follows that Tacitus must be referring to a subsequent period which he was dealing with in the Histories. In brief, the phrase must refer to government policy after the governorship of Agricola and before the close of the period covered by the Histories. (c.96 - and no later.)

As Agricola left the battlefield of Mons Graupius for retirement from active public service, both he and the emperor could think rightly that Britain had been thoroughly reduced. The territory which had not been occupied had, at the least, been circumnavigated. There was a coherent frontier line running along the Clyde and along the highland line, with forts carefully placed at the mouth of the glens backed by the legionary base at Inchtuthill and possibly supplied by the fleet. If the resources could be secured for the new boundary, then all Britain was within the orbit of Rome. There were signs, however, of strain upon the military strength, which Agricola had at his disposal. We have already noticed the way in which garrisons were withdrawn from the South and we have speculated about the number of men required to garrison the forts in the newly occupied areas. Frere writes, correctly, "Clearly he had reached the limits of his resources, despite the subdivision of certain units between fortlets." (28) Unless he had substantial reinforcements neither the plain of Moray nor the Highlands themselves could be occupied. Having regard to the nature of the terrain and litoral on the West there might have been a fundamental question about the nature of the occupying force itself. The fleet and marines might be more necessary than legionary and auxiliary forces.

Basically it was a question of numbers. The case could be made in British terms within the limits of the mandata handed over by Vespasian in 78. The question now was: could the case be made in imperial terms within the problems to be faced in the mid-80s and 90s? The short

answer seems to have been No. Tacitus presents Domitian as one who acted out of petty spite against Agricola. While there may have been an element of jealousy and perhaps suspicion in the emperor's attitude, even Tacitus cannot deny that his Father in law was accorded the honoured treatment of a victorious general.(29) That Domitian never used Agricola again may also be a matter of regret but even this may be understood within the conventions of the cursus honorum. Alongside these factors some element of policy needs to be sought for. The basis for it may be found in the critical situation that was developing in Central Europe. A powerful kingdom was arising in Dacia which posed a threat to the empire along the line of the Danube. Domitian had attempted to strengthen the Roman position in the angle formed by the upper reaches of this river with the Rhine. This was at least one purpose behind his war against the Chatti. The weight of numbers on this frontier was far greater than that along the highland line in Britain. Beyond the Danube were vast plains with peoples on the move. In the highlands there were relatively few, with nothing but the sea beyond - which itself required a form of surveillance for which the empire was unprepared. In general and strategic terms the Danube must have priority over the Grampians. Moreover, the government could not assume that all the lands to the South of Agricola's line of forts could be left ungarrisoned. Wales needed troops until the time of Hadrian. The Brigantes were still capable of insurrection. There was no point in holding the highland line if the regions to the South were insecure.

Domitian needed troops. The power balance of the Empire discouraged the raising of fresh legions. A governor's ambitions might be stimulated! Britain was a convenient province from which to get them. Perhaps of all the provinces it was the one with battle-hardened men and from which troops could be withdrawn, with the least risk, if the victory at Mons Graupius was as final as most people thought it was! So from Britain Domitian withdrew II Legio Adiutrix, several auxiliary regiments, including the British and most of the Batavian cohorts.(30) The question then for the governor of Britain and for the central government was: could the position left by Agricola be supported with reduced numbers? The answer was No. The XX Legion was withdrawn from Inchtuthill to Chester and a number of adjustments were made to the auxiliary dispositions. Fendoch in Glenalmond was certainly abandoned. Newstead became the pivot upon which the defence of the lowlands depended. But at the time of the accession of Trajan all lowland Scotland South of the Forth-Clyde line was still being held. The pressures in Central Europe continued to exercise their sway upon imperial policy and with the Eastern advance of Trajan combined to bring about a further withdrawal², in which Scotland

North of the Cheviot, perhaps of the Tyne-Solway, was evacuated.

Tacitus seems to have been at work upon the Histories during the earlier years of the reign of Trajan; perhaps between 104-109. Thus it may be that by the time he wrote the opening lines the total abandonment of Agricola's Scottish conquests had been brought about. He thus dismisses the phased withdrawal over two reigns in one biting phrase.

Once again it is to archaeological evidence that we look for evidence about the commencement of the retreat. We are hindered by not knowing the names of Agricola's immediate successors. Sallustius Lucullus would appear to have been one who followed him fairly soon. He was executed for supposedly naming a lance after himself, but that may mask some feeling of unease about the loyalty of the army itself to the princeps. His death may have occurred about 89 but we know nothing of his provincial policy. A certain Nepos was governor about 98 and he may be P. Metilius Nepos who was succeeded by T. Avidius Quietus. In neither case do we have firm evidence about their work. However Professor E. Birley has shown that the troops were withdrawn from Britain by 92.(31) The first stage of the withdrawal ought to have been consequent upon those postings. There is some evidence to show that the fortress at Inchtuthill was evacuated and destroyed before it was completed. The date may be as early as 87. Furthermore, there is no evidence to show that at the same time any forts, perhaps with the exception of Ardoch (and that is doubtful) were held North of the Forth-Clyde line. The alterations in the forts to the South continued apace, Hartley's examination of the Samian Ware seems to suggest that the changes were made between about 84 and 87; in other words very soon after the recall of Agricola. It was Domitian who abandoned the newly won territory. The final evacuation of Scotland may have been completed by 105.(32)

E. Birley and Pryce came to the same conclusion some years earlier. They point out that reference to the withdrawal in the closing pages of the Agricola might offend against pietas even though it provided ammunition for criticising Domitian. By the time the Histories were being written Tacitus was freed both from that convention and from the biographical form. He could now raise the subject quite explicitly. Sir George MacDonald tried to extend the period by a further thirty to forty years but the endeavour has not been successful. His caveat, however, serves to remind us of the element of exaggeration in the writings of Tacitus. Britain may have been reduced but it was not abandoned. Nor were all the gains lost. Wales was held and so was the whole of Brigantia. The Selgovae and Novantae suffered varying fortunes. But whether formally occupied or not they were never free from the influence of Rome.

Though the style is compressed the word statim is seen to have a certain force. Those who have seen the coins of 86-87 in mint condition, dropped in the course of demolishing the legionary base, will appreciate the sudden even precipitate change of plan. There was an emergency on the Danube.

- (1) I.A.Richmond.J.R.S. xliv. p.43. The Agricola gives prominence to queens: Boudicca and Cartimandua. But we should not assume that female leadership was normative in Celtic life; far from it.
- (2) Furneaux & Anderson, p.91.; Ogilvie & Richmond, p.205, however, suggest that hillmen could be translated as top men: i.e. overlords. If this is true then the title tends to substantiate theories about the confederate nature of the principality. The Brigantes would be the ruling aristocracy.
- (3) Richmond in JRS op.cit.
- (4) A.R.Birley. Britannia. 1973. p.179.
- (5) H.Mattingly. Tacitus on Britain and Germany. London. 1st ed. 1948, p.67.
- (6) R.M.Ogilvie. Agricola. Loeb Classical Library. rev.ed. 1970, p.59.
- (7) R.M.Ogilvie & Richmond. Agricola. Oxford. 1967. p.205.
- (8) R.E.M.Wheeler. Stanwix Fortifications. Oxford. 1954.
 Sir Mortimer identified three stages in the fortifications: phase 1 enclosed 17 acres and was possibly constructed about the time of the Claudian invasion. This may be regarded as a hill-fort. Phase 2, is, perhaps, not later than 60 AD and extended to 130 acres. This might be said to have followed the Roman invasion in the South. There were now defences running for two miles. The 3rd. phase took in 600 acres and had $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles of defences. (The 4th. phase may in fact be Anglo-Saxon.) Within the large area an attempt may have been made to contain as much water and pasturage as possible. Thus argued Wheeler Venutius may have been preparing, as best he could, for a siege. He does not seem to have considered the possibility that such large areas would be required for the assembly of an army mainly composed of two horse war chariots. The site was of crucial strategic importance because it was the natural focus of communications, especially for tribes rallying from the North and North West.
- (9) He does not seem to have been in office under Domitian. He was curator aquarum under Nerva; suffect consul in 98; and ordinarius, with Trajan in 100.AD.
- (10) Frere. op .cit. p.120ff.
- (11) Furneaux & Anderson, p.93; Ogilvie & Richmond, p.318; Frere, p.123; E.Birley, p.15; Burn, p.38; Collingwood & Myres, p.113; Mattingly, p.20. But see Liverpool Classical Monthly, Vol.1, no.2, Feb.1976. The date of Mons Graupius. A.R.Birley.

(12) Ogilvie rightly points out (*op.cit.*p.211) that there would be troops with Agricola who had taken part in the assault on Anglesey executed by Suetonius Paullinus. Agricola himself was likely to have been present as a member of the governor's staff. They might be expected to have known of fords across the Straits. It is possible to ford the Straits on foot over Caernarvon Bar, as Ogilvie points out (Admiralty Chart 1464:Menai Strait), at low tide. But there is no ford from Bangor. A strict interpretation of the text would allow to state that the auxiliaries crossed by the fords and they had the facility of swimming with their weapons and their horses, which is not quite the same thing as writing that they actually did so. The Ordovices were expecting a sea borne attack and thus perhaps were surprised because the Roman troops came ashore at a point where they were least expected and which, therefore, was somewhat more lightly held.

(13) Burn (*op.cit.*p.88.) asserts "E.B.Birley believes that Salvius went to Britain rather later, in 81". In his bibliography he refers to Birley's Roman Britain and the Roman Army. In his article Roman Law and Roman Britain (p.54) the work of the iuridicus is examined but no date is given for the arrival of Liberalis. If 81 were the year of arrival, it would appear that Agricola might well have asked for help, after a period in which he had tried to combine inforcement of his reforms with campaigning.

A.R.Birley in his forthcoming publication of the *Fasti* shows that Liberalis (ILS 1011) could have been in post 78-81. The appointment could thus be explained as an innovation to compensate for the governor's absence on lengthy campaigns in the far North, when possibly the death of Cogidubnus^{us} entailed the extra complex work of incorporating his client kingdom into the province. The evidence is not decisive. He could have been pro-consul of Macedonia 82-3 and consul in 84, but then there should have been another iuridicus between him and Javolenus Priscus who must have arrived in 84. But of this man, if he existed, we have no knowledge. He may have been iuridicus 78/79-81, or 81-84. *Fasti*:p.188-189.

(14) B.Farwell. Queen Victoria's Little Wars. London. 1973. p.27.

(15) Furneaux & Anderson think that Tanaum/Taum cannot mean the R.Tay because "Agricola cannot possibly have got so far thus early in his campaigns". (*op.cit.*p.106.) A number of other rivers are considered but even the Scottish Tyne is thought to be "a long way from Agricola's probable starting point". But if Agricola could march from Wroxeter/Chester to Carlisle in one season, there is no reason why he could not march from Carlisle to Perth. The distances do not vary much. Ogilvie (*op.cit.*p.57.) and Burn (*op.cit.*p.103.) are both quite clear that Agricola reached the River Tay.

(16) Furneaux & Anderson argue that the text is corrupt here and that no plausible emendation has been proposed. They quote Haverfield's suggestion that Agricola began the first part of his journey by vessel; but do not think that the text will bear this sense. Ogilvie & Richmond do not venture an opinion, Burn seems to incline to the view (*op.cit.p.130.ff.*) that it is to the crossing of the Solway to which reference is made. While that may be true the statement than lacks the dramatic content of the rhetorical force. As Ogilvie & Richmond remark (*op.cit.p.235.*) "The stretch of water most easily understood from the context is the Clyde."

(17) N.Reid. *Britannia* Vol.2, 1971. pp.143-148.

(18) The classis Britannica was based on Boulogne (Gesoriacum) during this period. In 2nd.c. another headquarters fort was built at Dover. The fleet had been used for offensive warfare earlier during the advance of Vespasian into South West England as well as of Frontinus into South Wales. The more normal functions were of transport and supply. Agricola seems to have used the fleet for all these purposes as well as dividing it into two squadrons, though of this we cannot be absolutely sure.

(19) Ogilvie & Richmond. *op.cit.p.245.*

(20) The relevant passage in Dio Cassius indicates that the troops were stationed on the West coast and therefore rounded Cape Wrath.

(21) The Caledonians are to be regarded as one of the British tribes. In these Northern campaigns there is a certain interchangeability of terms because Tacitus wishes to convey to the reader that it is Britain as a whole that is being conquered. The Caledonians and their allies, who are unnamed, constitute the last free peoples in the island.

(22) see A.L.F.Rivet & C.Smith. The Place Names of Roman Britain. London. 1979.

(23) Ogilvie & Richmond. *op.cit.p.56,58,61.*

(24) Richmond points out (*op.cit.p.44.*) that if we knew more about the size of the garrison stationed on the Claudian-Neronian frontier we should have a better idea of the strain imposed on military resources by this advance. "If area counts for anything, the increase in territory policed by military troops as a result of the Flavian conquests was very great." On the other hand, man power could be recruited from the newly annexed areas. Agricola had British troops at his disposal, as we have seen. Furneaux and Anderson suggest that the forts along the Forth-Clyde isthmus were evacuated when the next year's advance began. (*op.cit.p.114.*) This may have been the case in general but would it not have been dangerous to do so as a matter of principle throughout these campaigns? Much of

Britain lay open to insurrection and the army was much further away than in the days of Suetonius Paullinus. Some garrisons must have been retained if only to safeguard communications to the South and hold the newly occupied tribes.

(25) Burn's argument for the location of portus Trucculensis is that the fleet had already explored the West Coast in earlier years, but had not sailed right round the Northern capes. At some point, probably well to the North, it had turned back. Therefore when the fleet sailed from the Moray Firth area round these capes and reached the point at which it had turned back some time before the circumnavigation was complete. The portus does not have to be a base to which it returned, for example, during the winter. Tacitus does not say this. The disappearance of the word Trucculensis or some mutation of it may be accounted for by the influx of Gaelic and Norse. (Burn *op.cit.* pp.35-63.) The argument tends to rest on the assumption that the fleet operated as one, which may not have been the case. If it did then there was a good deal of sailing to be done, before the circumnavigation, in order to get the ships on the East coast from the West - and that was practically a circumnavigation in itself! J.G.F.Hind (Britannia 1974. p.285. ff.) answers Burn's argument well but does not examine the needs of the Eastern troops and therefore places the portus still in the North West. Ogilvie and Richmond (*op.cit.* p.282.) incline towards Richborough. Furneaux and Anderson (*op.cit.* p.141.) consider Carpow or Cramond more likely locations.

(26) Frere. *op.cit.* p.134.

(27) Frere. *op.cit.* pp.135-6.

(28) Frere. *op.cit.* p.136.

(29) It was now the convention that only members of the imperial house received an actual triumph. Successful generals received the rewards and trappings but not the actuality. We need not think that the distinction conferred was a means of recalling Agricola. Scapula and Corbulo had remained in post after their awards. (Annals 12.28; 11.20.) The point at which Vespasian was awarded his is not clear, but he seems to have stayed on in Britain after the initial campaigns in which he had played so distinguished a part. His award may therefore come either during or after his successes. The evidence is somewhat imprecise; but he could have remained in the province until 47. (see Britannia 1972. How long did Vespasian serve in Britain? D.E. Eichholz. p.149. ff.) Agricola had been governor of Britain for an abnormally long period. He was overdue for recall. Tacitus gives the impression (Agricola c.40.) that he was fobbed off with a reward that was both specious and spurious. But we

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should note that even he has to acknowledge that Domitian took the initiative in the matter of triumphalia ornamenta by proposing it and the Senate decreed it.

(30) Burn. op. cit. p.161.

(31) Birley. op. cit. p.21.

(32) B.R.Hartley. Britannia. 1972. The Roman Occupation of Scotland. p.1. ff. JRS xxvii. p.93; xxviii. p.141. The fate of Agricola's Northern Conquests. T.D.Pryce and E.B.Birley. See also xxix. p.5. ff.

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